TAKE A STAND WITH YOUR LIFE: TOM HAYDEN AND THE VISION AND DIRECTION OF THE STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY FROM 1959 TO 1965

BY
ALİ HAYDAR ALTUĞ

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE FOR GRADUATE STUDIES IN ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

BILKENT UNIVERSITY

THESIS SUPERVISOR
DR. EDWARD P. KOHN

SEPTEMBER 2004

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of History.

Dr. Edward P. Kohn
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of History.

Dr. Timothy M. Roberts
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of History.

Asst. Prof. Dennis Bryson
Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Erdal Erel
Director

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the thesis is to examine the development of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) from 1959 to 1965 and to show that Tom Hayden was the most effective figure in navigating the organization during this era. SDS was founded in 1959 and from 1959 to 1965 the main inner problem of the organization was to determine its vision and direction. The Port Huron Statement issued in 1962 was the first turning point in this aim. The writer of the Port Huron Statement was Tom Hayden. His main line of vision was to create an activist student movement throughout the country that would make social reform using the tactics of southern movement that was pursued by the black protestors. It is argued in the thesis that Hayden embraced the task of being the catalyst of southern civil rights movement and the activist students in the North and played an important role in shaping the vision and direction of SDS and in widening the organization's influence. With the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP), SDS fully followed the vision of Hayden. The models of community organizing, direct activism, and participatory democracy became the main terms in defining the organization's vision. In giving the account of this period, the documents in SDS Microfilm Collection that has been located at the Library University of Wisconsin were used. Most of the written discussions made by the members of the organization exist in this collection.

ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı Demokratik bir Toplum için Öğrenciler adlı organizasyonun 1959 yılından 1965 yılına kadar olan gelişme sürecini incelemek ve Tom Hayden'in bu dönemde organizasyonu yönlendiren en etkili kişi olduğunu göstermektir. Demokratik bir Toplum için Öğrenciler 1959 yılında kuruldu ve 1959'dan 1965'e kadar organizasyonun temel iç sorunu bir vizyon ve yönelim belirlemekti. 1962'de yayınlanan Port Huron Bildirisi bu amaç içerisinde bir dönüm noktasıdır. Port Huron Bildirisi'nin yazarı Tom Hayden'dir. Hayden'in vizyonunun ana çizgisi, tüm ülke çapında, siyah protestocular tarafından güneyde yürütülen hareketin taktiklerini uygulayarak sosyal reform yapmayı amaçlayan bir eylemci öğrenci hareketi yaratmaktı. Tezde, Hayden'in güneydeki sivil haklar hareketi ile kuzeydeki eylemci öğrenciler arasında birleştirici rol üstlendiği ve Demokratik bir Toplum için Öğrenciler organizasyonunun vizyonunu ve yönelimini şekillendirmede ve bu organizasyonun etkisini genişletmede önemli bir rol oynadığı savunulmaktadır. Ekonomik Araştırma ve Aksiyon Projesi ile beraber, Demokratik bir Toplum için Öğrenciler organizasyonu tamamen Hayden'in vizyonunu takip etmeye başlamıştır. Hayden'in savunduğu komünal organizasyon, dolaysız eylemcilik ve katılımcı demokrasi modelleri, organizasyonun vizyonunu tanımlamada ana terimler haline gelmiştir. Bahsedilen sürecin tümünü incelerken, Wisconsin Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi'nde bulunan Demokratik bir Toplum için Öğrenciler Mikrofilm Kolleksiyonu'na ait belgeler kullanılmıştır. Organizasyon üyelerinin yürütmüş olduğu yazılı tartışmaların hemen hemen tümü bu kolleksiyon içerisinde yer almaktadır.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was founded in 1959 by Al Haber as the youth chapter of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID) and continued its activities as a stable organization until 1969. This thesis will examine the development of SDS during the era from 1959 to 1965. There are two distinct terms within this era. The term from 1959 to late 1962 was the fledgling period, in which the primary concerns of the organization were to define its vision and strategies, to achieve an organizational development, to recruit effective members, and to question the relationship with the LID. The SDS National Convention held in Port Huron, Michigan in June 1962, marked the end of this fledgling period. The Port Huron Statement, mainly written by Tom Hayden, came into existence at this convention, and it more or less articulated the SDS vision. As the discussions during the years about the direction and structure of SDS from 1963 to 1965 proved, this vision was rather ambiguous, but it was sufficiently provocative to stimulate many students around the country. With the circulation of the statement, SDS membership rapidly increased. By 1966, forty-five thousand copies had been printed and the Port Huron Statement became the most popular document of the sixties.

From 1962 to 1965, SDS went through a highly complicated and problematic period. There is no doubt that SDS was developing rapidly, especially in the case of attendance and membership. Wide appeal among the students resulted in the

SDS becoming a mass movement by 1964. By late 1963, however, disputes arose within the organization. The main issue of the discussions was to redefine the vision and the direction of the organization. One group argued that SDS should give up its original notion of educating affiliated students as its priority and should deal with more urgent problems such as poverty and racism. This group proposed the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP), which aimed to organize the poor whites and blacks under the common cause of poverty. ERAP also intended for community organizing among these groups, which was thought to render them with significant political power and therefore to constitute the core structure of a participatory democratic decision-making system throughout the country. ERAP soon dominated SDS and educational concerns ceased. It even outmoded SDS when some of the organizers argued that ERAP should be an independent project cooperating with other sections of the society, such as liberals, civil rights movement organizations and poor adults, and should leave SDS on its own with its limited capability. No actual disconnection occurred, but ERAP became a more important component of the movement than SDS. In the end ERAP failed and by mid-1965, SDS activities became limited to peace issues.

The period from 1962 to 1965 was problematic because SDS became an influential, widely recognized organization: It faced an enormous growth on one hand, but lost its central structure, its effective leadership and its serious social reform plans on the other hand. During the period intense discussions were held within the organization, and crucial decisions that determined the future of the organization were taken. This meant that growth brought with it a sudden change in direction. The original strategy was to educate students—the professionals of the future—and to make them full time radicals. This aimed at social reform from

within, which would emerge when those students took the key positions in the nation's institutions. This notion was replaced by a more populist, activist, and urgent one during this period. The new notion proposed that SDS should be the catalyzing force within the current active movement. It should take active participation within the cause of the civil rights movement.

The thesis argues that SDS took the latter notion leaving behind the original one. The main argument is that one figure was especially effective and had the decisive role in pulling SDS in this direction. This figure was Tom Hayden, the second president of SDS, the "writer" of the Port Huron Statement, one of the initiators of ERAP, a community organizer, a profound admirer of the civil rights movement, and the "suppressor" of Michael Harrington—the LID chairman—and Al Haber—the founder and first president of SDS. Within the thesis, two distinct factors that navigated SDS are defined. One was the current wave of the movement, which is defined with the civil rights movement, peace issues, the mood of protest and activism and the impatient energies of the restless students. The other one was Tom Hayden as the dominant figure in SDS and as the organizer, defined with his vision, his talent of influencing people, and his passion. His vision was to take active participation, to make "a slogan into a reality, by making a decision into an action."[1] His vision explicitly arose from his impatience in trying to make a change with a deep commitment to activism. His passion was outstanding: during his activist career, he willingly went to the jail, as he believed that "it was both a necessary moral act and a rite of passage into serious

[1] Tom Hayden, *Rebel: A Personal History of the 1960s* (Los Angeles: Red Hen Press, 2003), p. 38.

commitment."[2] He was extremely talented in representing his ideas to the youth and influencing them. While "at the height of his commitment to self-renunciatory leadership, he dominated SDS meetings and freely threw his weight around."[3]

Hayden's radical vision was based on his influence from the civil rights movement and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). His experiences with the black protestors in Berkeley and the Bay Area and in Mississippi in 1961 "established the tone of subsequent relations between SNCC and SDS."[4] The thesis tries to show that the two factors—the current wave of the movement and Tom Hayden—were in harmony; they were generally coinciding with each other. The pattern proposed in the thesis is that the civil rights movement influenced Hayden deeply where on the other hand Hayden's vision affected the student crowds. Hayden perfectly took the role of the catalyst; he could spontaneously articulate the concerns of the students with a clear language and navigated them close to the civil rights movement and community organizing. He "advised northern radicals to support the southern struggle without hesitation," while combining "an infatuation with SNCC's revolutionary élan with a belief that all activists should move beyond civil rights reforms and join in a movement for a broad social change."[5]

The first chapter tells about the founding of SDS by Al Haber, his strategy in making SDS an effective organization, Hayden's involvement in SDS and the early tendencies of vision within SDS. Haber's strategy was to organize meetings

---

[2] Ibid., p. 64.

[3] James Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 271.

[4] Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 176.

[5] Ibid.

and conferences with the name of SDS in order to introduce the organization to as many people as possible. In this, he also benefited from the appeal of the civil rights movement by inviting members from SNCC. Haber was aware of the organizing skills of Hayden and he particularly struggled to recruit him. Hayden on the other hand, was not interested in SDS as an educational organization. This is proved by the fact that he tried firstly to be involved in the ranks of the National Student Association (NSA). He came to SDS only after he was refused by NSA. With Hayden's involvement, three different tendencies emerged within SDS. Hayden argued for a vision based on direct action, imitating the philosophy of SNCC and the civil rights movement, while Haber insisted on his original strategy of social reform from within. The LID on the other hand proposed a program to improve democracy in urban areas.

The second chapter firstly examines the Port Huron Convention—a turning point in the history of SDS—and Port Huron Statement and gives an account of the notion of participatory democracy. It is shown that the Port Huron Statement was a mixture of the result of the earlier SDS studies on determining a vision and Hayden's own additions. In the statement's vision, the key term was democracy and the aim was to improve democracy in America, to make it participatory. The values were of secondary importance—or added only with provocative concerns. It is argued that the intellectual feedback had been taken from Alexis DeTocqueville's account of democracy and was applied to G. Wright Mills' depiction of American political structure.

In the second chapter it is also argued that, along with the emergence of the Port Huron Statement, the convention was important for some other reasons. The first one is that a dispute and an informal break with the LID occurred. This

dispute resulted with an implicit fight between Harrington and Hayden—a struggle between two egos on getting the leadership. Consequently, Hayden outmoded Harrington from his symbolic leadership of the students and took over the position. Also, it is stressed that active participation in decision-making, a practice that was central to the notion of participatory democracy, was firstly experienced by the students at this convention. The revision of the first draft of the Port Huron Statement was made with collective study. An idea of having the Port Huron Statement as a living document was also came at this convention.

The second chapter finally deals with the disputes expressed in the SDS Membership Bulletin in 1962 and 1963. In giving an account of the discussions, Wini Breines' categorization given in her book *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal* is implicitly taken into account. Breines argues that SDS was split into two distinct camps after Port Huron. One group—including Hayden—pressed for what Breines calls as the "prefigurative politics" and the other—including Al Haber—defended the "strategic politics." Breines gives the following definitions:

> The term *prefigurative politics* is used to designate an essentially anti-organizational politics characteristic of the movement, as well as parts of new left leadership, and may be recognized in counter institutions, demonstrations and the attempt to embody personal and anti-hierarchical values in politics. Participatory democracy was central to prefigurative politics."[6]
>
> .....
>
> Within and alongside the new left's prefigurative impulse was what I have called *strategic politics*, which was committed to building organization in order to achieve major structural changes in the political, economic and social orders.

[6] Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left,1962-1968: The Great Refusal* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 6.

> Organization-building and strategic thinking were central to strategic politics.[7]

The thesis gives the historical account of this split and again stresses Hayden's and the civil rights movement's roles in the result. Significantly, it is shown that the "prefigurative politics" is not an appropriate category for the defenders of ERAP. It is argued in the thesis that the motivations behind ERAP were not limited to community organizing, direct action, and to experiment with the notion of participatory democracy. There was a clear strategic approach in initiating ERAP. That was to prevent the rise of black nationalism, and the apathy among the poor whites. The widening gap among poor whites and blacks was dangerous in the political sphere, which was undermining the efforts of the civil rights movement. In this sense, ERAP also displayed the "strategic politics" to a degree. Most of the members of SDS in 1963-65 period were defenders of ERAP and they possessed both strategic and prefigurative concerns. Clearly many new members in SDS were far from dealing with the "strategic politics", as they only had a temporary aspiration for direct action. On the other hand, there were still those who defended that a "strategic politics" based on education should be the priority. The two categories can be applied to these two camps. But the dominant portion of SDS was the aforementioned third camp, which included the ERAP organizers and their followers and the crucial fact was not to display the "prefigurative politics", but rather to display it as a counterpart of the civil rights movement.

---

[7] Ibid., p. 7.

The third chapter firstly tells about initiating of ERAP, the intense discussions on its nature, and about how ERAP defenders became dominant in SDS. When ERAP dominated SDS, a new direction was gained. As ERAP proved to be a powerful force, some of the significant SDS members from the old guard proposed to have ERAP as an independent organization and project from SDS. Many of them disconnected themselves from SDS informally and concentrated their energies on ERAP. Some of the new members also disregarded SDS and involved directly in ERAP. This caused emergence of a vacuum in SDS by means of leadership and structure and organizational capabilities. Many chapters were localized and SDS lost its force as a central organization at the national level. This change in the structure of the organization brought with it the question of to what degree SDS could be successful with a loose, decentralized organizational structure. The vacuum was filled with incompetent new members, most of whom were intellectually insufficient, and therefore, the center completely lost its effectiveness. As a result, with ERAP, both the structure and membership quality of SDS was changed.

Cleary, Hayden was a defender of ERAP and he was among the old guard who left SDS. The third chapter examines the Newark chapter of ERAP in which Hayden was involved. This case study gives an insight about what ERAP accomplished and why it failed as a strategic project. The problem of ERAP was not that it failed to reconcile the "strategic politics" with the "prefigurative politics". The failure of ERAP was rather that it proved to be insufficient to end racism and to prevent the rise of black nationalism that arose as a response to racism. ERAP had been aimed to prevent SNCC from opposing the civil rights movement and resulted with the change of tactics among the blacks. But The

Newark Riot marked that non-violent methods had already been given up and a new era had opened.

Finally, it is pointed out from this context that the most important fact that diminished dramatically SDS and ERAP force as effective organizations was the collapse of the civil rights movement. With the ERAP theorists and initiators, SDS was pulled deeply into the civil rights movement. It became the counter-part of it in the North and disregarded other strategies and visions except the peace movement. After 1965, when the civil rights movement left the stage, SDS had no other choice than to initiate Vietnam War protests. Tom Hayden's vision, which devotedly followed the philosophy of the civil rights movement, is a concrete particular example that helps to give an account of this process.

CHAPTER 1

Early Period of SDS: 1959-61

2.1- Al Haber and emergence of SDS

Robert Alan Haber, the founder of SDS, who would later become the first president of SDS, was a quite different personality than Hayden. His vision was based on a determined, but narrow struggle for a permanent social reform. Unlike Hayden's impatience, he was cautious, especially on the issue of using the energy. He sought for defining the priorities firstly, and then taking slow steps on the right way no matter how long it would take to achieve the goal. He was the founder and the first president of SDS, but after Hayden's involvement, his influence rapidly declined and his vision was marginalized within SDS.

Haber was a prominent activist in the University of Michigan during the late 1950s. He was a member of the Political Issues Club, which was the most influential activist club in the university. At the time, student radicalism in Ann Arbor was in progress and there was a rapid formation of a core group of young intelligentsia. Meanwhile, Haber was seeking to take up his radicalism in a more coherent way. His overwhelming influence upon affiliated students in Ann Arbor helped him to connect organic ties with LID and eventually to participate in SLID-

the youth chapter of LID. As a rapidly growing student activism in Ann Arbor seemed to be a good opportunity for a stable LID organizing, both LID officers and Haber himself appreciated Haber's involvement. SLID was facing an obvious decline in many parts of the country while the active relation between "Haber and SLID headquarters in New York makes it plain that the Ann Arbor chapter was fast becoming an anomaly."[8] On other campuses where SLID chapters existed, efficiency was poor, besides, "the organization's national convention in 1958 attracted only thirteen students. Yet the Michigan branch, thanks to the success of the Political Issues Club, began to thrive. The reason was Al Haber."[9]

Thus, Haber's position within SLID gradually became more influential and stable. Remarkably, this was an effective factor for the development of SDS. As an attempt to help SLID to survive, the name SLID was changed to SDS in June 1959, a name which Haber thought to be remedial for SLID's current decline. Up to 1960 spring, SDS was not even an immature organization, but was only an attempt to revive SLID's dismaying position. Practically there were no new members or recruits other than Sharon Jeffrey, daughter of two "active socialists and veteran trade union organizers who worked for the United Auto Workers in Detroit."[10] But the presence of a written constitution that had came into force in June, 12-13, 1959, implied that SDS might have been thought to be a serious and independent project. Article II of this constitution announced that SDS "shall be affiliated with the League For Industrial Democracy, and it shall function as the youth and student section of the League… and its principles and actions shall be consistent with the broad aims and principles of the League for Industrial

[8] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 30.
[9] Ibid., p. 30.
[10] Ibid., p. 31.

Democracy."[11] While these determinations were to be expected in such a dependent and early stage, the same article also adds that "the Students For A Democratic Society shall be autonomously constituted."[12] However, the prospects for the future of this youth chapter of LID were dependent on the course of the movement's circumstances. Al Haber's great organizing skills soon found a response, which proved to be a good opportunity for SDS to thrive.

2.2- SDS 1960 Conference For Human Rights In The North

In 1960 spring, a conference on human rights was held at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (April 28- May 1, 1960). Robert Alan Haber was the organizer of the conference with the name of "SDS 1960 Conference For Human Rights In The North." There was clearly an outstanding commitment, which was unexpected within the standards of the era: "Some 150 students from both the South and the North attended, forging ties that would become the basis of a durable alliance."[13] One of the most significant incidents that contributed to the importance of this conference was the formation of SNCC in April 1960. Invitation of some of the representatives from SNCC to the conference enabled the two groups -white student activists and SNCC activists- to interact. At the time, most SDS theorists were striving hard to determine a practical approach for SDS that would gather activists on the one hand and be effective in the issue of social reform on the other hand. As SDS and SNCC interactions continued, many

---

[11] *SDS Constitution,* art. I. (Amended at 1959 National Convention, June 12-13, 1959). SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.1.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, pp. 37-38.

attitudes began to be shaped as a result of the inspiration from SNCC. However, the degree of inspiration from SNCC is still a subject for historical debate. Activists of southern sit-ins, Michael Harrington from LID, CORE national director James Farmer, and other representatives from LID, CORE and NAACP were also present in the conference. Clearly there was a enthusiastic mood for defining a new political vision, and initiating a large-scale movement that would shape the leftist politics of the 1960s.

SNCC formed after a sit-in protest held by four black students from Carolina A&T College on February 1, 1960. When they entered a segregated local lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina and demanded service, the waitress refused constantly. A sit-in protest held by four people during the whole day was replaced by a thirty people on the next day. Gradually white students, too, attended the sit-in protest, and a week after hundreds of students began to participate actively. Some local white students soon responded harshly by threatening the protestors. Getting afraid of the hazardous situation, "the manager closed the store, and the mayor called upon black students and local business leaders to halt the protests for two weeks in an attempt to find a solution."[14]

The struggle in Greensboro did not resolve, but gave way for a new climax of protest in the issue of civil rights struggle. Using the college-church network, black protestors informed others throughout the whole South. Students rapidly "started sit-ins at lunch counters in Winston-Salem, Durham, Raleigh, and other cities across North Carolina,"[15] and then, spread the tactic outside the state. In February, "activists were using the tactic in seven states and over 30 communities

[14] Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 44.
[15] Ibid., p. 45.

including Nashville, Tallahassee, Chattanooga, Richmond, and Baltimore."[16] As a significant result of this student movement, SNCC was formed "from a group of Negro college students who had been brought together by some of the civil rights leaders interested in coordinating student sit-in movement that was spreading so rapidly throughout the South."[17] But more important was the fact that a new language of protest came out from the nature of the sit-in activisms, which consequently embraced by a large-scale of alienated and affiliated white students in the North. The influence of the sit-in movement in the South during the early 1960 was, as Calvert puts it, "dramatic and far-reaching" among the white students within a nationwide scale, as "no previous actions of the Southern civil rights movement had generated this kind of widespread activism among whites across the nation. In effect, the 1960 sit-ins generated the activist stage of the modern white student movement."[18] It was within "this brief moment of time" that "the sixties generation entered its age of innocence, overflowing with hope," and "it was the moment Al Haber waited for."[19]

Struggling for a wide appeal for SDS, Al Haber quickly endeavored to benefit from this atmosphere. The attitude of the sit-ins was an appropriate pattern to invoke other people, especially the white students to become activists. At the moment he made a correct move by inviting the Greensboro students to "SDS 1960 Conference For Human Rights In the North." This invitation quite changed

---

[16] Ibid., p. 45.

[17] Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, *The New Radicals: A Report with Documents* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 15.

[18] Gregory Nevala Calvert, *Democracy from the Heart: Spiritual Values, Decentralism, and Democratic Idealism in the Movement of the 1960s* (Eugene: Communitas Press, 1991), p. 89.

[19] Hayden, *Rebel*, p. 29.

the prospects. As "the Greensboro students had agreed to attend the conference, Haber and Jeffrey had no trouble generating interest."[20]

"SDS 1960 Conference For Human Rights In The North" was the first large-scale organization that held the name SDS, but it did not present the vision that Haber thought for the future policies of SDS. It only gave contents of the very early interests of SDS as a youth section of the LID on the one hand and provided a permanent recognition of SDS among students and young activists on the other hand. It also presented the implicit intention of gaining new supporters and new members to SDS. Significantly, unorganized, but still affiliated individuals were also called. This fact was one of the first and most effective organizing actions of SDS. It was mostly those unorganized, restless students who later became members of SDS, in which they found a response to their alienation. Many of the black activists at the time were uneasy for being affiliated with an older organization. One of them once recalled that "NAACP wanted us to be NAACP youth chapters, CORE wanted us to become CORE chapters, SCLC wanted us to become the youth wing of SCLC. We finally decided we'd be our own thing."[21] Al Haber thought that the same pattern was valid for the unorganized white students and he followed his way through this assumption. The purpose of the conference, as it seemed, was yet to set a main platform for the gathering of all disconnected student groups and uneasy individuals within the discourse of civil rights struggle, but there was also an invitation for a free, autonomous, and intimate student organizing:

---

[20] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 35.
[21] Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties,* p. 50.

> If you are a student who feels a moral concern about the extent of discrimination and segregation in your campus community, feel overwhelmed by the very extent of the problem, helpless to effect change;
>
> OR IF YOU are already involved in activities combating these evils, and would like to share your experience with others, and learn more effective action techniques for your own use;
>
> YOU WILL BE INTERESTED IN THE 1960 SDS PROGRAM AND CONFERENCE TO COMBAT DISCRIMINATION ON THE NORTH[22]

Being the organizer of the conference, SDS was presented as "a non-partisan educational organization of students who are concerned with ways of increasing democracy."[23]

As the name of the conference also implied, almost all the stress was still given to the issue of racial discrimination, a topic that at the time constituted the major concern of student activism in the North. SDS members noted "millions of Negroes and members of other minority racial and religious people are deprived of the right to a free choice of job, of housing, of the use of public community facilities."[24] The widespread discrimination and segregation happening just "in his own backyard ought to make the Northerner less eager to single out the South as the source of all wrongdoing and inequality."[25] Significantly, students were given the advice to act for the issues outside their campus, and to be real citizens:

> Taking effective action is relatively easy on the campus, but will it be possible for you to be as active and as successful a citizen in the "real world"? How will you face the problem of segregation in the modern urban metropolis, characteristically divided into the ghetto of the modern urban metropolis, characteristically divided into the ghetto of the urban center and

---

[22] SDS flyer, "to combat discrimination in the north act now…" SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.2. This flyer was prepared for "SDS 1960 Conference For Human Rights In The North."
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] SDS flyer.

> the "lily-white" suburb? How will you face a community much less liberal and thoughtful than the university community?[26]

To cope with the racial problems outside the campus, the students were advised to cooperate with the professionals such as "social workers, staff of civil rights organizations and local community relations agencies, government officials, university people engaged in community self-surveys, and so on."[27] The call for taking such kinds of professional aid implied that there was still a heavy LID domination of SDS. However, Al Haber had already received the recognition he needed, the conference was a real success for SDS, and as a consequence, "the United Auto Workers donated $10,000, which resulted in employing Haber as field secretary and holding SDS's first conference that June."[28]

Although the circumstances were cheering, the first SDS convention in New York showed that SDS still needed a certain time to develop. There was a poor attendance –only thirty people- and no concrete decisions were taken. The issue to be discussed was student radicalism, and several speakers soon found themselves to be exhausted within a theoretical, almost nonsensical debate on whether intellectual commitment or direct action should be taken. There was also a "lively debate about the value of organizing student protests against civil defense drills – one speaker thought such protests diverted attention from the criticism of American foreign policy, while another argued that the protests set the stage for such criticism."[29] Haber, who was elected as SDS president in this convention, appreciated the atmosphere of full discussion and urged that the SDS's approach to

---

[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties*, p. 61.
[29] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, pp. 38-39.

such problems should be multi-lateral and as a principle those problems should be open to discussion for all.

As SDS entered the year 1961 with approximately 250 members, the immediate task became recruiting new and effective members. Although there was a sense of idealism and hope, a clear vision for SDS was still lacking. This was mainly caused by the "limits of the current student activism in the North."[30] For Haber, there was a lack of "a positive interpersonal dynamic," mainly due to the fact that they were "not close enough to the issues."[31] While he complained that direct action was not a direct means of change for the total social structure, his deep involvement in the theoretical perspective prevented him from offering an alternative. However, the seminars that he organized at the University of Michigan, where a "free discussion of generally relevant issues in an atmosphere of equality and authentic search for answers"[32] was aimed for, provided him with a deeper knowledge of the student apathy. He was, to a degree aware that the issues such as "problems of poverty, health care, wasted agricultural and natural resources, meaningless work… arouse students neither to demonstration nor to discussion."[33]

But Haber's own attitude towards the problems of the country was still far from simple. In order to call for disarmament for instance, one must in any case have something to say about "what to do with the man power, resources, industrial plant, and capital equipment that are tied in the military machine."[34] Or, to define a

---

[30] Ibid., p. 39.
[31] Ibid., p. 39.
[32] James J. Farrel. *The Spirit of the Sixties: The Making of Postwar Radicalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 165.
[33] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 39.
[34] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

politics of civil rights, fundamentals of social equality theories were still needed. However, Haber knew that a kind of community organizing that had already come into existence within the activism of SNCC was needed to turn SDS into a strong movement. But what he understood from activism presupposed a "concentrating on realistic goals for student organization,"[35] which necessitated to define the priorities firstly, and then to direct the organization's limited energy to those priorities only. This stance constituted his main line of vision throughout all significant debates and disputes that occurred in the whole history of SDS. At he time, he saw in Southern students an intimate community consciousness based on the moral traditions of the black Church, while his conception of community spirit for the Northern student was compounded by theoretical inclinations such as intellectual discussion, academic research, and intense debate. Hayden's conception of community organizing, on the other hand, was fully content with Southern students' notion. Unlike Haber, Hayden took community organizing around values as the key strategic formation for political change. Neither intellectual discussion nor academic research was necessary; a community that was ready to act already constituted a significant political power.

The New Left and particularly SDS came to the stage with a remarkably steady power only when Haber's proposal was turned upside down. That is to say, the New Left became active only after its politics was defined as direct action in itself where theory had no significance other than sustaining it, instead of a conception of direct action whose value was determined by its relevance to theory,

---

[35] Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968*, p. 77.

that was, a direct action which "should become a pretext for 'a deeper appraisal of social problems'"[36]

The year 1961 marked a fledging period for SDS. There was almost no significant activism led by the organization and all efforts were concentrated on recruiting new and particularly, strategic members. During this period, the main direction of the so-called activism was navigated to a rather limited area: to the university campuses and to the University, which Haber thought to be a new and effective agent of social reform. In December 1961, in his "Professionals and Social Change Project", he declared that the SDS had "two emphases: 1) creation of the University as progressive force for social change in the society and 2) the development of a body of social criticism and program in the society generally toward an extension of democratic values and institutions."[37] In this way, Haber wrote that SDS wanted "to make social issues a concern of the university and …(wanted) to give the university some independence and leverage in the general society."[38]

2.3- Tom Hayden and his involvement in SDS

The most important incident of this recruitment period was persuasion of Tom Hayden to join SDS. Hayden's active involvement in SDS and his becoming SDS president for the 1962-63 period rendered SDS with an appropriate activist

[36] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 40.
[37] Al Haber, "Professionals and Social Change Project." SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No. 3.
[38] Ibid.

direction. Hayden's political vision offered some important answers for the dilemmas SDS was facing during its fledging period.

When Haber and other SDS members met in New York on June 1960 for the SDS convention, Hayden was on his way to Berkeley and the Bay Area, "already known as the Mecca of student activism."[39] At the time, Hayden was steadily making a professional career as a journalist. He was rising in the ranks of Michigan *Daily*, which he recalls as "the most important student institution on the campus and perhaps the most respected university paper in the United States."[40] Before the journey to Berkeley as a journalist, Haber had offered him full time involvement in SDS. Hayden refused the offer, as he clearly was not ready to give up his brilliant career on behalf of being an activist. However, experiences he had at Berkeley and the Bay Area transformed his attitude towards his personal life.

As he later wrote, when he arrived, "the Bay Area was radiating with a utopian spirit. Support for the sit-ins was intense. Locally, there was an electric effect when many students were arrested and physically hosed down on the marble steps of San Francisco City Hall for protesting the House Un-American Activities Committee."[41] On May 13, 1960, demonstrators, most of whom were students, demanded to attend hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee. As they were refused, a protest began. The police responded by attacking "them with high-pressure fire hoses, clubbed them, and hurled them down the marble steps, charging one demonstrator with a felony charge they could not, in the end, make

[39] Hayden, *Rebel*, p. 30.
[40] Ibid., p. 25.
[41] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 30.

stick."[42] Berkeley campus also had a strained and intense atmosphere where SLATE—a prominent student party in Berkeley, which objected to the issues of nuclear armament and Cold War policies—was seeking to widen its activism outside the campus and was in dispute with UC administration, which forbade students taking any action for off-campus issues. There, Hayden visited Livermore Laboratories of University of California, where studies for nuclear weapons were made. With the endeavors of local activists he also had the opportunity to be faced with the miserable conditions of the Mexican farm workers in Delano, California. Struck by the realities of the region, he took off to Los Angeles in order to observe the Democratic Convention. He had already been convinced in the Bay Area that "student activists had to be organized into campus political organizations, which would have to linked together into a single, unified student organization." For this he was eagerly looking forward to "the coming NSA congress as the first chance for many of the new student leaders across the country to meet each other face to face."[43]

All these experiences proved to reshape Hayden's mind on the issue of becoming an activist. But perhaps the most significant incident occurred during his confrontation with the protestors of the southern civil rights movement just outside the arena where the Democratic convention was held:

> I interviewed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Ultimately, you have to take a stand with your life," he told me gently. I felt odd writing the words in my journalist's notebook. As I left the line, and later as I left Los Angeles, I asked myself why I should be only observing and chronicling this movement instead of participating in it. King was saying that each of us had to be

---

[42] Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), p. 82.

[43] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 32.

more than neutral and objective, that we had to make difference.[44]

Before coming to California, Hayden had already been offered to participate in SDS. But he still did not consider it as a good choice to start his activist career. Although he was deeply affected by Haber's radical visions at their first meeting in 1959, his main impression was that Haber was too much absorbed in theoretical content of the issues and lacked romanticism. Thus, he ignored this opportunity and decided to become involved in the National Student Association, which he thought "was the only national forum for students."[45] He was feeling affinity at least with some of the issues uttered within the NSA vision. One of the older NSA leaders and founders, Allard Lowenstein's sympathetic approach towards the civil rights movement in the south also affected Hayden's decision. By this time, Haber had already been involved in NSA, by forming a circle called the "Liberal Study Group," which aimed to discuss the problems that were of "of particular importance to liberals and radicals of the university community."[46] In fact, Haber's plan was to recruit members for SDS. In this he was successful. When SDS became "highly visible" in 1962, many of "its members were also key activists in the then powerful NSA."[47] Soon after, SDS took a much more dominant role, and "outpaced the student-government-oriented National Student Association and became the primary national organization for student activists."[48]

---

[44] Ibid., pp. 32-33.
[45] Ibid., p. 33.
[46] Richard J. Ellis, *The Dark Side of the Left: Illiberal Egalitarianism in America* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998), p. 117.
[47] Stanley Aronowitz, *The Death and Rebirth of American Radicalism* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 29.
[48] Edward P. Morgan, *The Sixties Experience: Hard Lessons about Modern America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), p. 96.

Hayden attended the NSA congress at the University of Minnesota where thousands of students and leaders were in attendance. But unexpectedly, what he observed during the congress was that the older NSA leaders whom he respected "also felt a need to keep control of their organization and shroud its sources of money." This atmosphere of "secrecy eventually led to suspicion as the spirit of democratic decision making among students emerged."[49] At the time there were implicitly three choices for Hayden: to join the NSA establishment while continuing his professional career as *Daily* editor; to devote himself to southern civil rights movement; or to become involved in the Liberal Study Group, which Haber organized during the NSA congress in order to recruit fresh members for SDS:

> As I saw my options, they were to pursue reform through the NSA by running one of its national offices or to join Haber in creating the still-undefined SDS. In either case I decided that my short-term focus would be the South, my task: the building of northern student support for the southern movement. Finally, graduation came but with a decision no nearer.[50]

As a result he moved to New York and kept himself close to both NSA and SDS. But he never took seriously the SDS option. His decision was to join the NSA's ranks. For this purpose, he attended another NSA congress at the Madison campus of the University of Wisconsin in the summer of 1961. There was a heavy mood of determined protest on the problems of campus administration, civil rights, and peace. Students, perhaps for the first time were so unified around certain social issues. As Hayden recalls, there was also "an underlying tension, however, over whether change could be brought about through the existing system of student

---

[49] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 33.
[50] Ibid., p. 44.

movements, liberal foundations, and the Democratic administration in Washington or whether more radical departures, like those pioneered by SNCC."[51] Hayden was a defender of the latter choice. He ran for the vice-presidency for national affairs but antagonized the NSA old guard who found him much too radical and militant. He withdrew his candidacy, and the moment was clearly a turning point both in Hayden's activist career and in the development of SDS.

The only chance for Hayden was to join SDS. Haber was passionately endeavoring to persuade Hayden for formal participation in SDS. Thus, he instantly appointed Hayden as the first field secretary of SDS. In this Hayden saw the opportunity of both being involved in the civil rights movement and setting the background for northern campus organizing by linking northern students with the southern cause. The latter aim clearly reflected one of Hayden's political visions that would later shape SDS's nature.

2.4- Three early tendencies within SDS

At the end of 1961, there were three distinct visions within the newly growing SDS. Al Haber was urging for a campus organizing and transforming the university into an influential agent for social change. Tom Hayden was defending student organization not only based on on-campus organizing, but also widening the civil rights movement. LID, on the other hand, offered another form of organizing for SDS that pointed outside the campus. Parents of SDS thought that the most urgent social problem of the country lay in the urban towns, where

[51] Ibid., p. 46.

"removal of municipal government to a great distance from the people" caused permanent problems like: "housing, education, chronic unemployment and underemployment, racial discrimination, organized crime and juvenile crime, health services, transportation, the middle-class exodus."[52] All three visions still in some sense proposed that the students had to be organized around some social issues. Yet, at the time nobody had any strict idea about what SDS's main vision should be. But the three main tendencies discussed here constituted the early ideas that would eventually shape SDS activism.

Hayden believed that SDS was in essence "a manifestation of the student protest movement that emerged form the sit-ins."[53] Thus, its activism should follow the pattern of SNCC, namely direct action outside the campus. There had to be strong interaction with other sections within the society. In a sense, Hayden's aim was to connect political activism with moral values, to provide an authentic purpose for the students to unite them. This purpose, according to him, lay in direct action. Hayden's political organizing style was definitely provocative. He ignored theoretical approaches as much as possible, while, stressing private problems of the youth and successfully linking them with a social cause. He cautioned against the fact that the students –even activist students- were "scrambling to draw coherence out of …multiple academic and political pursuits" and this eventually left them "intellectually barren and politically spent, falling back on the use of slogans, and conforming to orthodox courses of action."[54] He urged students to direct their activism with their own personality and authenticity.

---

[52] League for Industrial Democracy, *A Program for Urban Democracy*. SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.3.

[53] Tom Hayden, letter to SDS members, 5 December 1961. SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.3.

[54] Ibid.

Southern Negro Students' attitudes provided him with the deepest inspirations: "in a real sense also they are their own leaders: they are defining the orienting policies of the struggle, they are restoring the individual personality to a creative and self-cultivating role in human affairs."[55] The Greensboro affair, the sit-in movement and SNCC were all emerged and became influential not as a result of leadership, but as a result of coordinating and acting. These were the key notions that Hayden embraced and pursued during his reshaping of SDS.

Haber, on the other hand was more inclined to theory and possessed a more sophisticated and long-term approach. What he wanted to create among the students was intellectual commitment, which was not a popular way of activism. His vision also included the opinion that the dynamics for social change lay within the institutions, and in order to transform the institutions, SDS had to direct its energy to the roots of those institutions. The professionals involved in those institutions were the university graduates from professional programs. His "Professionals and Social Change" written in December, 1961, clearly reflects this campus based vision:

> Most of our programming, and as well as that of the liberal, left, activist community, has been focused on the liberal arts college or on the liberal arts curriculum within the larger universities. It is always a matter of wonder when a Bus. Ad. or Law or Med student turns up on the mailing or membership lists of the liberal political organizations. Yet, the humanities-liberal arts programs are not the ones, by and large, producing the significant decision-makers in the society. The major groups of social influence are the lawyers, doctors, journalists, educators and teachers, scientists, engineers, business administration graduates and like professionals. It is important in pursuing our general program that we develop an orientation toward the professional schools and professional curriculum.[56]

---

[55] Tom Hayden, "Student Social Action." From a speech delivered at CHALLENGE, University of Michigan, March 1962. SDS Microfilm. Series 4B, No. 160.

[56] Al Haber, "Professionals and Social Change Project."

Yet the students in those professional programs and professions were not interested in political, social, and economic corruption in America. The education system that trained these people was conservative and prevented them from taking a social role on the issue of reform and democracy. Most of these students kept their conservative stance when they graduated. However, as Haber noted, "it is from these schools that the positions of responsibility, power, and status are filled in this society. It is from them that the executive office of business are filled, that the school systems are staffed, and, as well, that the candidates for public office are graduated."[57] The main aim had to be to give an end to this situation through campus organizing.

By this time, in order to cope with the problems of small urban towns, LID proposed "A Program for Urban Democracy" on October 24, 1961, which aimed to democratize the underdeveloped urban parts of America. Significantly, it planned to invoke a tendency among the people towards political participation in order to cope with their problems:

> The League for Industrial Democracy believes that the surest way to seek political health for our cities must be the attempt to democratize them, and that the first step must be to encourage the growth of workable processes and institutions that are as close as possible to the people and their direct concerns and as open as possible to direct, popular participation.[58]

The urban democracy defined within this program was in essence participatory, an approach, which SDS later defined as its main political vision. It was the first time that the American left turned its face towards political weaknesses of urban ghettoes and small towns:

---

[57] Ibid.
[58] League for Industrial Democracy, *A Program for Urban Democracy*.

> Political development within the typical large American city is one urban problem that has received little attention. It has not in fact, generally been recognized as a 'problem.' But the traditional municipal forms of government which evolved democratically in small towns have long ceased to function democratically when inflated without much adaptation into large city. Outbreaks of functioning urban democracy have been scattered, rare, and brief.[59]

LID rendered SDS with a significant role within this program. The students were supposed to be involved in the pilot-cities chosen for the program, and they would "participate both in the program itself and in the affairs of their own home communities and the communities of which their colleges are a part."[60]

In a sense, Haber's "Professionals and Social Change Project" was a reply to LID's "A Program for Urban Democracy." He defined SDS concerns as limited to campus organizing but also as endeavors for long term goals. As those people in professional programs were and would be the ones that had the most dominant voice in the decision making process on critical issues of the country, Haber stated that the aim of their university and campus organization should be "not only to fill social slots with men of competence, but much more importantly, to examine critically those 'slots' and to fill them with men of vision." As a consequence of this aim, "the university becomes a progressive force for change in the society."[61] In this sense, he defined SDS's main concern outside the campus as establishing "close working relations with the relevant professional associations," or working "for the creation of new associations."[62]

---

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Al Haber, "Professionals and Social Change Project."
[62] Ibid.

Hayden, whose commitment was "enlarging the movement for civil rights outside the South,"[63] was urging for direct action. SNCC needed support, for Hayden's experiences in the South showed him that it could not be successful alone. At the time, "there was an entire generation to arouse, primarily about civil rights but also about the larger issues that SNCC itself had begun to raise."[64] With this concern, Hayden asked: "In what proportion should we focus on university and educational questions, national political issues, political theory of discussions of "how to do it"?"[65] The present situation of SDS was so bounded with such theoretical discussions that reminded Hayden of the habits of the older leftist generation. Ties with LID were also extending the nature of this problem. From the very beginning, he possessed distrust in what he called "New York-based politics", which pressed "a sense of the problems inherent in building an independent student organization with no resources save those of the inbred and old-fashioned New York circles."[66] The time-bound and overly ideological nature of these institutions, for Hayden, was completely inconsistent with his vision that was based on his student experiences. The SNCC students, long before his SDS involvement, had rooted the seeds of an authentic and pragmatic commitment:

> They lived in a fuller level of feeling than any people I'd ever seen, partly because they were making modern history in a very personal way, and partly because by risking death they came to know the value of living each moment to the fullest. Looking back, this was a key turning point, the moment my political identity began to take shape. The student culture, exemplified by conformist fraternities and impersonal lecture halls back in Ann Arbor, had left me searching for more. The *Daily* was engaged in the real world, but "objectivity" stunted my desire to make a commitment. Haber and the SDS were to be respected, but they

---

[63] Hayden, to SDS members, 5 December 1961.
[64] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 67.
[65] Hayden, to SDS members, 5 December 1961.
[66] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 45.

> were too cerebral. Here were the models of charismatic commitment I was seeking- I wanted to live like them.[67]

To point out, Hayden and Haber in fact shared the same ideas on some key points. In essence, both "wanted to create a multi-issue organization" that "would be nonideological and avoid committing itself a priori positions about the causes or cures of social problems."[68] Both were eager to avoid dilemmas and sectarianism of the old ideologies, believing that their new vision "would distance it from the communist Old Left, in the minds of both its potential recruits and inevitable critics."[69] Like Hayden, Haber's vision too included the presupposition that the new organization would evolve from experience of the students and members. In their minds, there was a devout attachment to democracy and a critical approach to older presuppositions. As Haber stated, "any imposition of any predetermined standards or categories of analysis narrows the creative potential of the movement."[70] Haber had also respected the position and activism of SNCC, and more or less shared the same concerns with it. However, he stressed the notion that activism had to deal with wider problems, deeply rooted social problems. This was a stance, which again made him to be absorbed within more theoretical thoughts. For the Greensboro affair, he said that there was "of little intrinsic importance." The aim was not to get "equal rights or constitutional guarantees, or protection of the laws", but rather, it pursued "personal equality and dignity that has nothing to do with race."[71]

---

[67] Ibid., p. 36.
[68] Dominick Cavallo, *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 191.
[69] Ibid., p. 192.
[70] Ibid., p. 192.
[71] Farrel, *The Spirit of the Sixties,* p. 138.

In this sense, it is clear that there were certain tendencies that separated the two. The differentiation was obvious to SDS members from the very beginning. As Bob Ross formulates, the main dispute was that "for Hayden, it was what formulation would mobilize people to act. For Haber, it was what formulation was logically unassainable."[72] Hayden persistently asserted that, "theoretical problems had to be resolved through trying ideas out in practice –not through endless debate over theoretical documents."[73] His conception of activist participation covered a wide range of social issues, from "fighting for civil rights to patient efforts at lobbying for progressive legislation."[74] However at the time SDS was far from simulating such kind of participation. As Hayden told: "Al was pushing the idea of building a mailing list and sending out theoretical documents; that's *all* SDS was. It was not a vehicle for action."[75] He didn't hesitate to take a critical position. His writing "Politics, The Individual, and SDS" opens with an offensive discourse implicitly against Haber's vision:

> What is needed politically is the person who combines the capacity for intellectual honesty and clarity with the ability to persuade and accomplish. One quality without the other is less than desirable. If only honest and clear, the individual tends to be encased in an ivory tower, uncontaminated by the exigencies of life which might test the value of his theoretic judgments. Rather than a participant in the political process, he becomes a witness.[76]

"Politics, The Individual, and SDS" presented consistently the outline of Hayden's views up to that time. The writing continued with a critique of the individual in the university, who "does not recognize political guilt, except that of

---

[72] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 99.
[73] Ibid., p. 99.
[74] Ibid., p. 100.
[75] Ibid., p. 99.
[76] Tom Hayden, "Politics, The Individual, and SDS." SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No. 6.

the 'fools' who do not accept his dream and his reality." The second target was the individual in the American Socialist movements whose sectarianism is "a compulsion to be honest and clear without regard to the consequence." This kind of person possessed a "programmatic myopia," a habit, which soon makes him "indistinguishable from the established power order except insofar as he is identified as part of the 'loyal opposition'."

There is still a valuable choice for the individual, which is defined as "being neither too far from the centers of power to be effective nor too close to be honest." For position, adopting of values, dealing with social problems honestly in a wide sense, and finally a nonsectarian approach are offered:

> For instance, our loyalty should be to international peace, and only secondarily to the Democratic Party or: to the creation of a left in America, and only secondarily to SDS. It is to say that we do not perpetuate an organization or its own aggrandizement unrelated to its success in maximizing our goals. It is to say we don't cling to a form because it makes us comfortable.

Within this context, SDS also "should not view itself as a <u>student</u> movement," and it must not "fall into deadly red baiting". But above all it must become "more than a mailing house from which arrives an occasional fact sheet or commentary of interest to the reader." Members of SDS then, "should be personally developing in themselves political ideals…and then working out deliberately the complexities of making the ideal a reality."[77]

[77] Ibid.

2.5- Hayden's influence

It was Hayden's vision that shaped SDS's stance. In March 1962, he gave an activating speech, which would later become a SDS pamphlet called "Student Social Action". This speech, as Hayden recalled, was literally the first draft of the Port Huron Statement that was the most influential written document of SDS's political vision. The speech firstly pointed out the general situation in the southern campuses: There was heavy paternalistic relation between the students and the administration. The most important problem in protesting segregation outside the campus was that they did not have the right to do that in the eyes of the university administrators. As a matter of fact, "most student governments lacked real power" because "such paternalism produced students molded in its own authoritarian image."[78] Consequently, students were "becoming more remote from the possibility of a civic life that maximizes personal influence over public affairs. There …(was) a deep alienation of the student from the decision-making institutions of the society."[79]

Being aware that remoteness of the students from each other and from other parts of the society was the cause of the present apathy and restlessness among the students, Hayden immediately linked this situation with the university's politics: "Where members of an institution are linked by functional bond of being students, not be the fraternal bond of being people, there develops a terrible isolation, of man from man."[80] Indeed, the problems that the individual was faced within the

[78] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 104.
[79] Hayden, "Student Social Action."
[80] Ibid.

university, was simply an extension of the larger social and economic problems outside the campus. Between academic and financial system, for example, this relation was obvious in the instances like the parallels "between competition for grades and for chamber of commerce awards, between cheating and price rigging, between the statements 'attendance is a privilege, not a right' and 'we deserve the right to refuse service to anyone.'" However, while "the university situation in America …(was) more a symptom than a basic cause of …problems", a college was still a "place to embark on a movement of reform, a place with intellectual equipment and a reservoir for unused creativity, a place from which reason might make a last attempt to intervene in human affairs."

Finally, there was still a "human desire for a creative neighborhood of people", which, among students would arise by "unfolding and refinement of moral, aesthetic, and logical capacities of men in manner that creates genuine independence."[81] Therefore, "the opposite of apathy was personal independence," which, as Hayden wrote, "was the university's responsibility to encourage."[82]

As Hayden recalled, the speech fulfilled its aim to invoke an activist spirit among the people, as "it was the right public appeal for SDS to make."[83] As James Miller sums up, Hayden's attempt was "to synthesize existentialism and pragmatism", and it found a good response in a provocative sense while "his understanding of political action remained ambiguous." Nevertheless, his pragmatic rhetoric was clear enough to make people act: "he was inviting readers to reinvent –and "to actively enjoy"- the world of politics."[84] There was certainly a

---

[81] Ibid.
[82] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 75.
[83] Ibid., p. 76.
[84] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 100.

wide appeal, but in fact, it was Haber's early recruitment efforts that had set the background for the wave. In 1961, there were already "eight hundred dues-paying members (at one dollar a year); and two thousand scattered activists on mailing lists,"[85] a result of Haber's mailing organization.

At the time, LID and SDS relations were generally in accordance. In "The Urban Democracy Program" LID's position was clear: "to encourage community action …and to seek ways to make such community action capable of sustaining itself and dealing with many problems, rather than just one."[86] LID's stress was on urban democracy, but the idea of community organization was also encouraged. However, Hayden was not content with LID paternalism. SDS was rooted in the tradition but "needful of imaginative revamping in light of new realities, new needs, new goals."[87] The tradition of which LID was still a part signified ideology, while Hayden was intent upon stressing "the development of whole human beings as more important than simply recruiting people to an issue or an '*-ism*' of any kind."[88] If there was an example for the new student movement, this was certainly SNCC not LID. The way to be followed was the path that the southern students had gone in Greensboro affair, in the sit-in movement; that was activism and coordinating; not the path imposed by old ideologies and by a paternal leadership. The forthcoming Port Huron Statement would become the vehicle of adapting the mood of southern activism for northern student activism. In 1960 NSA Congress, Hayden saw in the attitudes of SNCC representatives the qualities "that were

---

[85] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 68.
[86] League for Industrial Democracy, *A Program for Urban Democracy*.
[87] Tom Hayden, letter to SDS members. 5 December 1961.
[88] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 75.

needed before a genuine, lasting, and effective political movement could be built":[89]

> They were in many ways like myself- young, politically innocent, driven by moral values, impatient with their elders, finding authentic purpose through risking their "lives, their fortune, and their sacred honor"- in short, a genuinely evolutionary leadership. In their heated intellectual discussions at the seminar, values were never separated from their analysis. For direction, they quoted not Marx but the Talmud, not Mao but Camus: "A man can't cure and know at the same time. So let's cure as quickly as we can. That's the more urgent job."[90]

Not surprisingly, the peculiar intellectual background inherent in SNCC would be imported to the Port Huron Statement. To turn towards Camus and another neglected figure C. Wright Mills, and not towards Marx was, in a sense, an expression of SDS's non-ideological stance. The New Left's most prominent differentiation from the Old Left lay in this tendency. It is worth pointing out the fact that theoretical and ideological backgrounds were of secondary importance to the New Left practices, and this was among the key approaches to distinguish it from the traditional left. Instead of Marxism, the New Left embraced the notion of participatory democracy and dynamic activism, both of which in fact could never be clarified and justified within any theoretical perspective. Most of these differences were publicly expressed at the Port Huron Convention held in July 1962.

---

[89] Ibid., p. 75.
[90] Ibid., p. 36.

CHAPTER 2

Port Huron Convention and the Port Huron Statement

3.1- Before the convention: Ann Arbor meeting

The speech that would later become the pamphlet "Student Social Action" was given at a meeting in Ann Arbor in March 1962. Hayden and forty activists gathered in Ann Arbor in order to set the conditions for turning the SDS into a new large national student movement. Hayden had newly returned from the South, where he had experienced the bitter conditions in the south as SDS field secretary. He had been passively involved in the civil rights movement in Mississippi-the focal point of SNCC concern- and Albany, and had been arrested two times. For many activists, the Albany experience resulted with a grasping of "a new sense of doubt among both activists and black followers toward the practice of nonviolence itself."[91] In the south it was difficult for love to transform hate.

However, Hayden came to Ann Arbor with an intention of putting SDS into a large national organization that would be a northern instance of SNCC activism.

---

[91] Ibid., p. 66.

His main aim, like the other activists that met in Ann Arbor, was to turn SDS into a stable student organization. At the time SDS seemed to be the most appropriate organization to gather under, because it already had gained a satisfactory recognition among students. Al Haber had set this stage: he had constructed the mailing list, and made visits to many of the student leaders all over the country. Also, at the time, most of the SDS members were well known figures as they had "played a constructive role as spokesmen for liberal and democratic ideas"[92] within the NSA and the Liberal Study Group. Hayden became the president of SDS for the 1962-63 terms in order to develop this potential.

But there was still no more than recognition of the SDS among the students. SDS needed devout members and affiliated masses. There were other deficiencies, too. The southern experience proved that the activists lacked immediate power due to the current obscurity in being an effective organization. For Hayden, what he did was only "to go from beating to beating, jail to jail, a lone field representative for an organization that was little more than a mailing list."[93] Personally believing that his job within the civil rights movement in the south was limited, he turned his face more seriously to SDS in order to render it to be more effective. The immediate problems to be solved were to define its direction as a student organization, and the question of whether it would be a decentralized, truly participatory organization.

The Ann Arbor meeting was aimed to focus on these issues. Unexpectedly, all the participants proved to be eager for a commitment to SDS. Soon after, it was decided that the new organization needed a stimulating manifesto for their

---

[92] *Students for a Democratic Society Convention Bulletin*, 25 April, 1962. SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.6.

[93] Hayden, *Rebel*, p.67.

generation. Tom Hayden was given the task of preparing the first draft of the manifesto.

"Student Social Action", given as a speech, was widely approved as the first draft of the forthcoming manifesto. As the meeting continued with great enthusiasm and with hope, the SDS members judged that they were in the beginning of creating a large-scale student organization. Al Haber rushed for a national convention, which the SDS members believed would be a turning point. Finally, "after a period of loose organization and flexibility," it was "necessary to establish some order": first, to establish an order on "who's in the organization and who's out"; and second, to clarify the nature of the relations with various chapters, associated groups and with independent groups with which SDS was in contact.[94] The main aim in this was, in fact, to unify these groups under SDS and to render SDS a dominant role in the movement. The best way to this aim was to issue a manifesto.

The preparations began to make the convention on the June. Meanwhile, a problem arose: There was a need for a sponsored site to hold the convention, or otherwise a good deal of money to hire one. Significantly, many of the SDS members had no possibility to take the latter option seriously. They simply had no money, and no stable resource to get a financial support.

This was a permanent problem of SDS all the time. Any financial support, when needed, was generally gotten by chance. This was also the case for the Port Huron Convention in June. Haber for a certain time tried in vain to find a site for the convention. Finally Sharon Jeffrey—a devout SDS member from the very

---

[94] *SDS Convention Bulletin*.

beginning—appealed to her mother, Mildred Jeffrey, a very important socialist figure of the interwar era, and a trade-union organizer for the United Auto Workers. After the Second World War, Mildred Jeffrey continued to pursue social reform within the ranks of the Democratic Party. Unlike the parents of other student activists, most of whom belonged to the middle class, Sharon's mother was a powerful and influential figure: she was "an outspoken feminist and one of the most prominent women in the Democratic party, serving in the Sixties and Seventies on the Democratic National Committee and the national board of the Americans for Democratic Action," and later became the president of the National Women's Political Caucus."[95] Mildred Jeffrey responded positively and near the town Port Huron she arranged a site belonging to Michigan AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations). It was a matter of chance that SDS found a place to hold its crucial convention.

3.2- The Port Huron Statement

3.2.1- Main concern of the statement: values or democracy?

In April 1962, SDS issued a convention bulletin in order both to announce the convention and to clarify the issues and visions to be handled in the convention. The main aim of the convention was to "adopt a 'political manifesto' expressing the intellectual and programmatic outlook of the organization."[96] The key term was the concept of democracy. The political manifesto would primarily

[95] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 32.
[96] *SDS Convention Bulletin*.

deal with the concept of democracy in a way to clarify its notion within the left and to "provide a much needed statement of conviction and program for the young left in America."[97] For this purpose, SDS members believed that the concept needed to be clarified with regard to the current situation of the American society.

However, what emerged was, in outlook, a critique of American society in *moral* terms, "a compelling vision of a regenerated society, and a sketch of a strategy for moving forward."[98] There was apparently a moral approach in the Port Huron Statement, which was sometimes seen as a more prominent issue among the others. Significantly, "it was the first manifesto in the history of the twentieth-century American Left to focus primarily on the problem of ethical existence."[99] Thus, this was identified as a totally new approach, and this fact was the cause of this prominence. Most of the SDS members possessed a deep ethical background and this played a role in shaping their vision. Hayden for example, was particularly interested in the relation of human values and politics, which "led him to the works of Albert Camus, and existentialism provided him a framework for exploration of values in a non-theistic framework."[100] This was the mood of the sixties and Hayden was an ideal example. There was a general interest in existentialism among the whole generation, which consequently entailed a concern with deep moral and spiritual values. This was an inseparable part of their attempt to formulate a new vision of social reform, and significantly "it gave them some

---

[97] Ibid.

[98] Stewart Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), p. 57.

[99] Patrick John Diggins, *The Rise and Fall of the American Left* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), p. 228.

[100] Calvert, *Democracy from the Heart*, p. 92.

basis, other than the Judeo-Christian tradition, for justifying their moral convictions and for the expression of their humanistic values.[101]

But it would be a mistake to conceive the Port Huron Statement as solely a moral critique. To attain a moralistic attitude was neither an end in itself, nor the main problem in the Port Huron Statement. The main concern was the problem of democracy and power in American society. Unless a desired democracy was attained, a moral possession was not desirable. Participatory democracy was the target and was also an ideal. However ambiguous, it was the key term that made meaningful all the lines of critique in the Port Huron Statement. The most difficult concern of SDS was to define some deep problems in American society—problems that would interest a vast portion of the society. What the old left proposed was far from this approach because Marxist ideology was the key concern. Clearly Marxism was never close to American values and ideals and thus the old left failed to connect itself with the masses. Participatory democracy was, on the other hand, more close to the American mind. SDS members were aware of the fact that nobody would oppose the notion of participatory democracy as an ideal. Any opposition or any discussion would arise only on the task of giving it a clear definition and a strict application. However, as an ideal, participatory democracy was not a vague notion. The problems aroused only when it came to put it in practice. In this sense, the importance of participatory democracy was rather that it was a valuable instrument for defining the political and social deficiencies. What stood at the opposite side of this ideal was defined as a deficiency or a problem—for instance, an unbalanced distribution of power. However naïve, SDS members

---

[101] Ibid., p.92.

thought that it was an easy and clear way, a practical method to reach to the masses.

3.2.2- Content of the statement

The document opens with a justification of the alienation among students and the causes that led them to activism. The roots of student activism were based on two main causes in the statement. First one is "the permeating and victimizing fact of human degradation, symbolized by the Southern struggle against racial bigotry," and second one is "the enclosing fact of the Cold War, symbolized by the presence of the Bomb."[102] There were certainly other significant social problems, too. But, these two "were too immediate and crushing in their impact, too challenging in their demand," and thus individuals were more urgently needed to "take the responsibility for encounter and resolution."[103] Initially the statement embraced the issues of civil rights and the peace movement as the most crucial issues, and in a sense justified their cause with the political implications of these two.

Recognizing the fact that they were a minority against a vast majority of a mass society, the most outstanding paradox they faced was also defined in the initial stage of the document: "we ourselves are imbued with urgency, yet the message of our society is that here is no viable alternative to the present."[104] Although SDS members recognized the situation with pessimism, they doubted

---

[102] *The Port Huron Statement*.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.

that within this static and affluent society, most individuals, in an existentialist sense, could feel an anxiety about their role within this society:

> And if these anxieties produce a developed indifference to human affairs, do they not as well produce a yearning to believe there *is* an alternative to the present, that something *can* be done to change circumstances in the school, the workplaces, the bureaucracies, the government? It is to this latter yearning, at once the spark and engine of change, that we direct our present appeal.[105]

In his *Radical Paradoxes*, Peter Clecak bases the later SDS failures on the assumption that, as early activists were "unable to calculate the narrow range of American politics, they could not know how quickly their activity would dramatize the inherent weakness and limitations of a radical youth movement in an advanced capitalist society"[106] Therefore, "it was a consequence of this interplay between their own expectations and the resistance of society (that) propelled the drive toward sectarianism."[107] But it seems that unlike the suggestion of Clecak, SDS was deeply aware of the difficulties they were actually facing from the beginning. Even in the earliest stages, SDS members knew that American society was materially so improved that this virtually rendered social reform virtually impossible. In this context, the new generation had "witnessed the exhaustion not only of Utopias, but of any new departures as well."[108] It was therefore upon these pessimistic presuppositions that SDS built up its idealistic vision. Granting that there was such a problem within their cause, SDS members still *hoped* that "the search for truly alternatives to the present, and a commitment to social

---

[105] Ibid.

[106] Peter Clecak, *Radical Paradoxes: Dilemmas of the American Left: 1945-1970* (New York: Harper &Row Publishers, 1973), p. 241.

[107] Ibid., pp. 241-242.

[108] *The Port Huron Statement*.

experimentation with them, is a worthy and a fulfilling human enterprise."[109] But, to point out, it was the possession of power and not the resistance of the society that SDS members proposed as the main social problem. Clecak admits that "the young left displayed a partial awareness of the chief dilemmas of contemporary American radicalism: the paradox of powerlessness and the moral ambiguities of politics."[110] In the issue of social resistance to reform, the statement declared, "the dominant institutions are complex enough to blunt the minds of their potential critics, and entrenched enough to swiftly dissipate or entirely repel the energies of protest and reform, thus limiting human expectancies."[111] But still, the most serious SDS vision included the intention that still "something *can* be done to change circumstances in the school, the workplaces, the bureaucracies, the government."[112] This, as SDS members believed, "would replace power rooted in possession, privilege, or circumstance by power and uniqueness rooted in love, reflectiveness, reason, and creativity."[113] The importance of the effort to activate SDS as an educational organization was justified in this approach. But educational aims did not constitute the priority. The dominant figure in creating the statement was Hayden and the document significantly opened with an emphasis on the civil rights movement. However, a certain emphasis was still given to education because the statement was planned to reflect every concern within SDS. Hayden was the most prominent writer of the statement, but the statement was not solely a reflection of his own vision. It was planned to be an open document; one that would stimulate further discussions on vision. Immediately after the Port Huron

---

[109] Ibid.
[110] Clecak, *Radical Paradoxes*, p. 238.
[111] *The Port Huron Statement.*
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.

Convention, Hayden stepped up his voice for his original vision, and opened a debate on some of the issues like on-campus organizing and educational aims that were stressed in the statement.

Without doubt, SDS members believed that the power in the American nation was held by The Military-Industrial Complex. It was "the most spectacular and important creation of authoritarian and oligopolistic structure of economic decision-making in America" and defined as "the powerful congruence of interest and structure among military and business elites."[114] This formation was the result of "the rise of the military and the installation of a defense-based economy."[115] It is argued in the statement that "the military and its supporting business foundation have found numerous forms of political expression," and with this assumption, "business and politics, when significantly militarized, affect the whole living condition of each American citizen."[116] Within this power structure, some SDS members believed that the true vision was to seek the way for realigning the Democratic party. This was the most reliable option to modify the power structure when applied with a programmatic university reform:

> True, the Dixiecrat-GOP coalition is the weakest point in the dominating complex of corporate, military, and political power. But the civil rights, peace, and student movements are too poor and socially slighted, and the labor movement too quiescent, to be counted with enthusiasm. From where else can power and vision be summoned? We believe that the universities are an overlooked seat of influence.[117]

Thus, the SDS members offered to turn towards the university as the basic institution of social change. The statement points out that the university "is the

---

[114] *The Port Huron Statement.*
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.

central institution for organizing, evaluating, and transmitting knowledge,"[118] and thus the central institution of possessing knowledge as a means of influence and power. However, the situation of the American university was also dismaying. Professors and administrators were silent on the social issues, curriculums did not reflect what a critical academic study should be and idealist vision was outmoded. All the educational means, with the curriculum, were ordered solely by the administration. The statement argues that within this condition "the student learns by his isolation to accept elite rule within the university, which prepares him to accept later forms of minority control" and so "the real function of the educational system-as opposed to its more rhetorical function of "searching for truth"-is to impart the key information and styles that will help the student get by, modestly but comfortably, in the big society beyond."[119] However, among the students, there was restlessness and thus, there was a potential for a social reform movement. It was clear that many of them were "breaking the crust of apathy and overcoming the inner alienation that remain the defining characteristics of American college life."[120]

Finally, the ideal aim of the movement, the target of social reform, is described in the statement as a democracy of individual participation in the American society, which seeks these principles:

> that decision-making of social sequence be carried on by public groupings;
>
> that politics be seen positively, as the art of collectively creating an acceptable pattern of social relations;
>
> that politics has the function of bringing people out of isolation and into community, thus being a necessary, though not sufficient, means of finding meaning a personal life;

---

[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.

> that the political order should serve to clarify problems in a way instrumental to their solution.[121]

This is the notion of participatory democracy, the central focus of SDS vision. It was rather an ideal to reach, rather than a realistic demand within the current situation of American society. Its meaning was never fully clarified, and in this way it stressed the pragmatic side inherent in SDS. It was mostly with the vague character of the participatory democracy that SDS could pursue open debates and encouraged full individual participation in shaping its vision.

3.2.3- The statement's concern with American society

It is worth pointing out that the statement reflects the reluctance of SDS members to embrace a strict social theory in offering a solution to the problems. A set of values replaced theory mainly because the statement "meant to support broad consensus rather than a formal doctrine."[122] In this sense the discourse on the values implies the weak point of the SDS vision. This weak point was that the statement in fact lacked a strict problem to offer to a broad consensus except the peace issue and segregation and SDS members sought to fill this deficiency by introducing a set of values. The other concerns other than the peace issue and segregation were quite abstract with regard to the interests of the society: the Cold War context and its impact upon the society, apathy among the middle class, formation of a mass society as a result of the political stalemate and affluence, alienation and powerlessness. Therefore, what the statement advised were not

---

[121] Ibid.
[122] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p.143.

urgent and incentive alternatives for the public: "aspiration of individual empowerment, for community, and for personal wholeness and authenticity,… translation of private troubles into legitimate political concerns" and exposing "the invisible connections in the entangling web of issues that plagued the nation and the world."[123] There was inherently a "distance between ends and means, between the rhetoric of the desirable and the agenda of the attainable."[124] Appealing to values was a last resort to invoke a tendency for reform in a mass society.

Most SDS members were aware of the fact and this forced them to modify their radical visions in a way to compromise with the power. By "making compromises and seeking temporary alliances, they were actually looking for an alternative formula with which to transform the United States into democratic utopia."[125] For this reason, there was in the statement a "continuity with traditional American ideas of popular self-government, egalitarian ethics, and social justice.[126] The ambiguity of the concept of participatory democracy, which opened the way for compromise, also reflects this non-radical stance. Having continuity with American traditions and rendering the SDS members to offer a social reform by compromising with power, the concept of participatory democracy was the strongest and most key point of the statement. But the problem to be discussed is whether there was a deep-rooted problem in American politics and society, which could render the concept of participatory democracy a concrete orientation.

---

[123] Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s,* p. 57.
[124] Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage,* p. 114.
[125] Aronowitz, *The Death and Rebirth of American Radicalism*, p. 30.
[126] Ibid., p. 30.

3.2.4- Ideological origins of the statement

With regard to the issue of democracy and power, there was an implicit influence from DeTocqueville. Affiliated students, together with the southern civil rights activists and the poor were a minority against a disinterested majority and The Military-Industrial Complex. If there was any concrete problem to define in this context, it was the problem of tyranny of the majority, asserted by DeTocqueville. What SDS aimed for was to invoke in the society a feeling of suspicion and opposition against the majority. To believe in a kind of democracy where the majority unquestionably holds the power, was the deep problem and was the source of the apathy among the individuals. In this sense, the SDS attitude became exactly what DeTocqueville thought:

> There are those not afraid to say that in matters which only concern itself a nation cannot go completely beyond the bounds of justice and reason and that there is therefore no need to fear giving total power to the majority representing it. But that is the language of a slave.[127]

Besides, there already existed apparent injustices and irrational situations continuing due to this tyranny of majority. The most striking example was the issue of southern segregation, on which many of the activists were faced with what Tocqueville feared:

> My greatest complaint against democratic government as organized in the United States is not, as many Europeans make out, its weakness, but rather its irresistible strength. What I find most repulsive in America is not the extreme freedom reigning there but the shortage of guarantees against tyranny.[128]

---

[127] Alexis DeTocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Baskerville: Fontana Press, 1994), p. 251.
[128] Ibid., p. 252.

Many of the activists noticed in the south and particularly in Mississippi that it was the strong bonds between the white segregationists and the local government that prevented them from achieving practical results. Blacks lacked voting rights, and therefore they, with the white allies, could constitute only a minority against this tyranny. The situation in Mississippi was *the* example of the contradiction between American democracy and the American ideal of freedom. The power is held unconditionally by the majority, therefore "freedom is in danger when that power finds no obstacle that can restrain its course and give to moderate itself."[129] This problem was valid in the national sphere too, especially when it was the case of jurisdiction. As DeTocqueville states:

> In the United States, when the majority has irrevocably decided about any question, it is no longer discussed. Why? Moral authority exercised by the majority over thought. Democratic republics have turned despotism into something immaterial.[130]

Thus, it is with DeTocqueville's account of American democracy that the concept of participatory democracy gets a clear implication. The concept was rather vague, and had no sense in the issue of application, as many of its critics asserted. But with DeTocqueville's account of actual democracy, it at least found a ground to be based on, or to put it differently; it could define a clear problem to base itself upon.

It was undoubtedly C. Wright Mills' account of American politics and society that influenced explicitly and directly the vision in the Port Huron Statement. Although he was a leftist, Mills rejected much of the suppositions of Marxism and the old left. He relinquished the classical homogenous categories

---

[129] Ibid., pp. 251-252.
[130] Ibid., p. 254.

like "ruling class", "bureaucratic politicians", or "military clique" and instead proposed a heterogeneous concept called "the power elite".

This involved "the often uneasy coincidence of economic, military, and political power"[131] and its way of holding the power nourished by "the transformation of the publics of America into a mass society."[132] By expanding and centralizing its hierarchies, the power elite eventually began to manipulate "the middle levels of political power,"[133] and in this way outmoded them as a means of social change. What was crucial in Mills' account was that the power elite existed "in a weakened and formal democratic system containing a military order already quite political in outlook and demeanor."[134] SDS members interpreted the Cold War period with a direct influence from Mills' account: there was a permanent war economy nourishing the power elite as a consequence of this, there were a mass society and a formal and weakened democracy. The idea that the political powerlessness of the individual was the consequence of this situation was also captured from Mills:

> The distance between the individual and centers of power has become greater, and the individual has come to feel powerless. Between political hope and political realization there are the two parties and the federal bureaucracy, which, as means of political action, often seem to cut the nerve of direct political interest. Indifference may thus be seen as an understandable response to a condition of powerlessness.[135]

The remedy was the notion of participatory democracy. But it was again Mills who warned that the nation's problems were not manifest and mostly remote

---

[131] C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 278.
[132] Ibid., p. 297.
[133] Ibid., p. 296.
[134] Ibid., p. 276.
[135] C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 347.

from the individual's everyday life as far as the individual was in content with his/her life. On the attitude of the Power Elite he declared:

> There is nothing conspiratorial about it, although its decisions are often publicly unknown and its mode of operation manipulative rather than explicit.[136]

Therefore, the most basic problem of SDS vision was again the fact that in so far as the problems were unseen at the individual sphere, they were not problems at all. Thus, to define SDS as an educational organization and to direct its energy toward educational efforts were more sound strategies than to step up immediate activism. In this dismaying context, Mills saw that the only possibility for the left was to "to capture the political intellect in order to gain a continual re-evaluation of its going program" and in order to make public a continuous "bookkeeping" of the U.S. political economy.[137]

The dominant figure in creating the vision in the Port Huron Statement was Tom Hayden. He was not only in charge of adopting the first draft, but was also the key figure in deciding content of the original manifesto. This was a natural outcome. When it was the case of expressing and clarifying the mutual concerns of students, he was a natural talent. When a SDS member, Richard Flacks recalled his involvement in SDS, he particularly remembered how Hayden's speech "Student Social Action" influenced him more than anything:

> The language they were talking, the ideas, were all of a piece. But no one expressed it better than Hayden in that speech. He was putting into words what I have been feeling but had not been able to imagine articulating. Once I heard these words, I said "I know I believe in this."[138]

---

[136] Mills, *The Power Elite*, p. 294.

[137] C. Wright Mills, *The New Men of Power: America's Labor Leaders* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1971), p. 265.

[138] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 102.

Almost everybody in SDS shared what Flacks thought. Hayden was the speaker. SDS vision was the sum of many people's mutual concerns, but it was Hayden who shaped and clarified that vision. If there was a discussion on Port Huron, he was always at the center. There was a natural consensus among the students that whenever a dispute arose, he should be the spokesman. Another SDS member, Bob Ross remembered the dominance but also the stunning harmony that Hayden captured in the Port Huron Statement:

> "Tom was The Writer. Everyone knew that he was The Writer. That was something in between being a recorder of people's ideas and saying to people, 'This is what you *really* mean.' Tom was a genuine leader. He led because he really did express what people wanted."[139]

In this sense, although SDS was truly open to individual leadership and open discussion, there was nevertheless a prominent leadership of one figure. But everybody was content with this situation. This situation was beneficial for SDS, especially when it was the case that SDS was a newly emerging organization. In that sense, Hayden's leadership role and his charming aura were effective factors in preventing an early dissolution.

3.2 The vision in SDS Convention Bulletin

The Port Huron Statement was not in itself a key document that changed dramatically the course of events. It was rather an expression of a movement that had already been existed potentially if not separately. Its contents clearly did not reflect new visions or new concerns. It is apparent that the main vision and the

[139] Ibid., p. 109.

main concerns of the student movement had already been defined in SDS Convention Bulletin issued in early 1962. The participants invited to the convention had all been acquainted with these. In the case of discussing these predetermined issues, SDS members even knew who would oppose and who would not. The key subjects of the Port Huron Statement such as the situation of American society, a need for a new democratic vision and a serious campus organizing were all examined with details in early 1962:

> An exploding world population and a nuclear weaponry threatening to explode the world, new nationalisms seeking the readiest way to throw off economic exploitation, poverty, and political dependency; complex bureaucratic and corporate structures changing the relation of man to his work, to his government and to his community; incredible strides in technology, medicine and industrial productivity: these are the new realities.[140]

With the "new realities" that had been defined and announced before the Port Huron Convention, the remedy to these harsh realities and problems had also been defined. What was needed was a public, responsible, and influential left, "not one housed in garrets, lunatic and ineffectual; … not empty or deluded in its goals and sterile in its action; … not deadened by its failures or chained by myopic view of human possibility; … not timid and intellectually paralytic."[141] In defining this kind of left, a clear distinction from the old left was explicitly made. It would neither be the one "that emasculates its principles before the icons of unity and bipartisanship" nor be the one that "induces sectarian rigidity" that "encourages stereotyped rhetoric."[142] Rather, the new left had to take up a hopeful, idealistic and imaginary vision and turn this vision into concrete programs of social reform.

---

[140] *SDS Convention Bulletin*.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.

Thus, it was not the Port Huron Statement that first stated the ideological divisions between the new and the old left. In fact, there was no such division explicit in Port Huron Statement. Most of the crucial issues on the vision of SDS were taken up more explicitly in the Convention Bulletin.

For instance, the notion of systematic organizing within the campus in terms of a political party form was also investigated in the bulletin. The aforementioned reform movement came "too infrequently from the Democratic and socialist parties, the trade unions, the liberal, civil rights, civil liberties and peace organizations, the writers and members of the various professions."[143] Thus, American University ranked among the most reliable institutions for the new left. By "putting forth a platform presenting student interests and concerns running candidates for student government and pushing legislation, maintaining issue committees for action and internal education," SDS aimed "to build cooperative relations with existing parties and to encourage SDS groups to adopt the political party reform."[144] In offering a political party politics for student organization, the main aim was political education through which a legitimate progressive social movement could be built:

> The view that we tried to develop … was that the youth movement should not be side-tracked in parochial concerns isolated from the context of the national political picture, that our activity on local issues should be judged by criteria deriving from a perspective on the problems and priorities of national politics, that our activity in the university should be toward making that a more effective institution or agency for social change in America and, that our involvement in student government should be viewing it as the democratic framework in which political ideas can be made legitimate and relevant to the student community, and as the agents of students in working for university reform.[145]

---

[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.

As a result, SDS had already defined its objectives in the beginning of the year 1962. The Port Huron Statement did not announce any new visions. What it did was only to provide a concrete reference point of the issues. It was also a concrete expression of a present restlessness among students of the middle class. It provided the points that were mutual to those people and therefore, was effective in uniting separated groups and gathering them together under SDS. This means that the Port Huron Statement was a document that, apart from other concerns, was planned for a particular purpose. This plan was to step up SDS voice and to organize people under SDS and not under any local organization that would have the same vision. It was simply with the help of this manifesto that SDS would be turned into a concrete organization with a solid vision. In this, the main aim was to render SDS to possess a stable place within the area of activist politics:

> Emerging from the June convention we had a perspective. If someone asked what SDS believed in, we could point to the Port Huron Statement and use that as our touchstone.[146]

Another serious point is that the statement clarified what the discontent students had in their minds. Significantly it was in the Port Huron Statement that an intellectual and ideological justification was provided for the movement. Actually, the intellectual and ideological background involved in the statement was not composed of any new figures: The students who took part in the convention already "had learned from C. Wright Mills, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Albert Camus, and communitarian anarchists."[147] But it was in the Port Huron Statement that all those mutual points among the students were identified and announced. By

---

[146] Jim Mansonis, "National Council, 1962: Report of the National Secretary." SDS Microfilm, Series 2.A, No.1.

[147] Farrel, *The Spirit of the Sixties*, p. 148.

articulating those points mostly with Hayden's words, the statement significantly helped in coordinating these students.

3.3- Port Huron Convention

Port Huron Convention held in July 1962 was important not only because it was the moment that the Port Huron Statement came into life, but because of some other crucial reasons. Firstly, the idea of having a *living* manifesto—an idea, which reflects the SDS spirit very well—emerged unintentionally at this convention. Second, a community spirit by which all the participants could involve in full discussion on the political issues was firstly rendered. Finally, a real conflict with the parental organization LID first occurred at this convention.

SDS was clearly not a simple organization of political dissent. It was also an intimate community organizing, within which people could freely discuss and express themselves, but more importantly, could take active part in both defining and navigating the nature of the movement. These patterns had already been set long before the convention. But the prepared manifesto had initially been conceived as a fixed document of reference in the case of a need to clarify the SDS vision. Thus, although the SDS members would have had a decisive role in SDS, this role had still been bounded by the document. Significantly, this presupposition had to be altered in the Port Huron Convention due to a disorder in the arrangement efforts for the meeting.

Haber and Hayden decided to send a copy of the seventy-five pages draft to the participants before their arrival to the convention. As there was the problem of arranging the convention place, the posting of the draft copies started late. Thus,

the copies would reach most of those participants only when they were about to set out on their trip to Michigan. As a result, when they came to the convention, most of the attendants were not well-informed about the details in the draft although they already had known the visions of SDS proposed in it. Hayden recalls that when they arrived, most of the people "began complaining that the draft manifesto was too long and had arrived too late for their examination."[148] The situation became dismaying because while it was necessary to have a manifesto urgently, most of the attendants inclined to reject it for the mentioned reasons. The idea of having the Port Huron Statement as a "living document" came at that moment. As a principle not premeditated, the document was then supposed to be one which was open to discussion, change and revision for all the time. In this way, SDS became a fully participatory organization that was without any fixed imperatives.

As the seventy-five-page draft needed reconsideration, the students were separated into small groups in order to discuss the sections just before the meeting. Both the major and the minor sections all were discussed by each group without exception. There was an intimate mood, a first instance of what was defined as community organizing:

> We designed small democratic groups-something like those which C. Wright Mills had imagined- to sit around tables, or under trees, drinking coffee, taking notes, arguing animatedly, over eight separate sections of the draft: themes and values, the role of students, American politics, the economic system, racism, communism, foreign policy, and the nuclear issue.[149]

The participants demanded that the draft had to be rewritten but "it was also obvious that a group of 60 people could not rewrite the document in three days."[150]

---

[148] Hayden, *Rebel*, p. 78.
[149] Ibid., p. 78.
[150] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 109.

Therefore, it was as a consequence of this fact that the draft was turned into a discussion paper although it had been planned as a real first draft before the meeting. In this way, people could have the opportunity to discuss democratically the contents and the vision of *their* SDS. The notion of active participation in decision-making and the situation where "Haber's 'seminar model' of politics put into practice"[151] both came into existence firstly at this meeting.

There was finally a crucial situation that made the meeting important: among the sixty participants invited, there were some key figures from the old left. Some of these figures were invited because it was still important for the students to hear their ideas on the new left vision. However, the others were invited only because of the fact that there was a dependency on the AFL-CIO for the site. To point out, quite different camps were ready in this decisive meeting. Most SDS members had a positive attitude towards those guests because they believed that as they "attempted to break new ground it would be important to have sympathetic and established friends who could defend and interpret" the newly born vision with regard to the existing political context.[152] Nevertheless, there was a certain negative feeling towards what all those old leftists represented, especially towards the mood of sectarianism:

> Those of us entering SDS from nonpolitical backgrounds found this atmosphere amusing, obscure, and irrelevant; like fervent religious sects poring over catechism or the Torah. I could not understand how seemingly serious people could get so enmeshed in such endlessly divisive hairsplitting debates. Surely there was no lesson in their experience for us.[153]

---

[151] Ibid., p. 117.
[152] Hayden, *Rebel*, p. 79.

[153] Ibid., p. 79.

SDS members had a positive attitude towards the guests from the old left. But, probably as only a principle, they had also no negative feeling about the other guests from *any* other sections of the American left. One of those guests was Jim Hawley, a seventeen-year old representative from the Progressive Youth Organizing Committee, the youth group of the Communist Party. He was uninvited and demanded to have a seat as a nonvoting observer. For the first time a dispute with the LID came into existence at that moment. The LID was an organization with a staunch and unconditional anti-Communist attitude, and expected from its youth chapter the same attitude. However, SDS's vision was that the kind of democracy they were trying to press for was an attitude without any prejudice:

> Democracy, we are convinced, requires every effort to set in peaceful opposition the basic viewpoints of the day; (and) only by conscious, determined, though difficult, efforts in this direction will the issue of communism be met appropriately.[154]

The LID representatives instantly objected to allowing an observer from the Communist Party. This was a very important problem, bigger than SDS members could guess. To allow Hawley in the meeting was to violate "the long-standing traditions of the League for Industrial Democracy."[155] As one member of SDS, Steve Max recalled, to the LID it was almost "like recognizing Cuba" while for the rest, "it wasn't anything."[156] But SDS members did not take a step back and responded that any observer would be tolerated in the meeting. This response was mainly because of the fact that the problem was implicitly centered on the issue

---

[154] *The Port Huron Statement*.
[155] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 116.
[156] Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, p. 112.

that "SDS didn't want to be told whom it could and couldn't let observe."[157] Hawley left the meeting on the second day by his own will. But in fact his presence was not the cause of the dispute. Michael Harrington, who up to that time regarded himself as the dominant figure-a leader- of the young socialists, had already felt that SDS was pressing for its own vision and own leadership. In this, Tom Hayden was the leading figure. The real dispute soon broke out over this hidden feeling.

The explicit concern of the dispute however, was the handling of the issues of Communism and the labor movement in the Port Huron Statement. Harrington had read a copy of document before arriving at the meeting and was ready to start a fight. The statement's critique of current anti-Communism not only targeted the American society and the political institutions, but also targeted the LID approach:

> Thus much of the American anti-communism takes on the characteristic of paranoia. Not only does it lead to the perversion of democracy and to the political stagnation of a warfare society, but it also has the unintended consequence of preventing an honest and effective approach to the issues. Such an approach would require public analysis and debate of world politics. But almost nowhere in politics is such a rational analysis possible to make.[158]

Harrington never tried to make any debate on world politics at the meeting. No matter what lay behind Harrington's criticism, anti-Communism was an inseparable part of his and the LID vision. The critique of the national policy-making in the statement, which objected to the assumption that "the Soviet Union is inherently expansionist and aggressive, prepared to dominate the rest of the world by military means"[159] was enough to alert him. The statement also declared

---

[157] Ibid., p. 112.
[158] *The Port Huron Statement.*
[159] Ibid.

"almost without regard to one's conception of dynamics of Soviet society and foreign policy, it is evident that the American military response has been more effective in deterring the growth of American democracy than communism."[160] It was too much for even the mildest LID representative at the meeting. Upon these lines an angry debate over SDS attitude toward Communism inevitably began. What was disturbing for the SDS members, and especially for Hayden, was a heavy paternalistic and sometimes paranoid approach from the LID representatives. Hayden recalls that the debate on Communism took the shape of a "doctrinal litmus test."[161] In the outlook there was not a serious disagreement on the issue of Communism. What Hayden did was simply to question "whether the Soviet Union was *inherently* expansionist, aggressive, and bent on taking over the world by military means, or whether it was becoming a defensive and paranoid status quo power."[162] Harrington was tough on the issue, but this was not actually a problem. The question on Communism was not a priority in the SDS vision. As Hayden offered that they "end the distinction between communist hunger and anticommunist hunger" and should have a more rational approach on Communism, Harrington agreed.[163] He said "an unreasoning anticommunism has become a major social problem for those who want to construct a more democratic America."[164] The dispute on communism was actually almost over, but nobody cared about that.

It was rather the style of discussion that made the differences apparent and deeply separated the two sides. Harrington shouted almost all over the time. To

---

[160] Ibid.
[161] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 81.
[162] Ibid., p. 81.
[163] Ibid., p. 81.
[164] Ibid., p. 81.

many students and observers, his antagonism exceeded the limits of an ideological discussion. A polite dispute turned into a territorial offense against the new generation's potential status. Harrington's mistake was his tough response. Most of the students were disappointed as their political idol shouted without an apparent cause and proved to be an uncompromising figure. For the students, it was totally a strange behavior:

> Many of those listening were stunned. Michael Harrington was a friend, an ally, a model- just the year before, Hayden had cited Harrington as one of the two political figures young leftists admired.[165]

The cause of Harrington's nervous, uncompromising behavior was that a totally new movement was about to emerge at the Port Huron Convention. The vanguards of this movement were the students with their own leadership. In fact it was mostly this behavior that weakened his position among the students. Harrington was faced with a sudden shift of his image at the convention:

> "I'd always been the youngest at everything I'd ever done…. My self-image was as a *young* person. Now, I'm in this Oedipal situation. Up comes this younger generation. I think that they are ignoring my honest, sincere and absolutely profound advice. And this struck at my self-image. I think that part of my emotional overresponse was there: I interpreted this as an Oedipal assault on the father-image."[166]

Harrington found himself unable to make a decision on which side he would involve himself: old left or the new left? On the part of the students, he lost his leadership position. Apparently, it was the time for Hayden to take the leadership role. As Harrington was dragging himself to a dilemma, Hayden appreciated the situation: "It was a setup," he concluded; and "there couldn't be a more perfect

---

[165] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 114.
[166] Ibid., p. 115.

setup. We were giving birth to some new force in American politics. And Michael, purely by virtue of being older and having other attachments, was being an obstacle."[167]

Harrington's response was harsh. After the convention Tom Hayden and Al Haber were suspended from the LID. This meant that the ties between SDS and the LID were about to break if SDS did not take a step back. Most SDS members were content with a disconnection. Apart from ideological differences, there was a certain problem with the LID. LID's tax-exempt status was for a long time a serious obstacle that prevented SDS "to engage in political partisan activity."[168] In fact, SDS members were not partisan activists and therefore a serious conflict on this issue did not emerge up to that time. What was disturbing was that this caused a parental domination of the LID over SDS.

But a rational approach dictated to SDS members that a break with the LID would have severe consequences at the time. SDS had no money and no fund-raising while "staying with LID meant two salaries, worth $120 a week, and office overhead" and "being part of a ready-made network of links to the liberal and labor left in America."[169] Thus, after a participatory discussion, SDS members decided to take a step back. The section about Communism in the statement was revised and relations with LID were repaired.

---

[167] Ibid., p. 113.
[168] Ibid., p. 235.
[169] Ibid., p. 133.

3.4- After Port Huron

The SDS national convention in Port Huron and the Port Huron Statement did not resolve most of the serious problems of developing SDS. For Hayden, it was with this convention that SDS "found a broad leadership and widespread support."[170] This was true, but the real problems to be solved were quite different. In fact, "the statement and relatively few people who had formulated it, who believed it, and who would work to make that vision a reality"[171] were all that SDS had on the credit side. In the 1962 national council report, the situation was honestly described: "there was a paper membership (and) no one knew how many, or who was paid up" and "there was a series of chapters who had never heard of us, others whom we have heard from this Fall who to our surprise considered themselves related to us."[172] The roots of this problem did not lay in the existing chapters and members, but, as the report declared, lay rather at the center. Most of the time after the convention "has been spent in personal re-education and acclimation," the report said, and this caused the fact that "the expected direction which was to have emanated from the national office has not come." The executive staff "has been somewhat directionless and has found only requests for help rather than help itself." To conclude, SDS "has not yet done much. Nothing much has 'happened.' A few programs, more or less successful. A few members.

---

[170] Tom Hayden, "President's Report," *SDS Membership Bulletin,* No: 1, 1962-63. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No. 19.

[171] Mansonis, "National Council, 1962: Report of the National Secretary."

[172] Ibid.

A good dash of rhetoric, occasional brilliant insight. But nothing has happened."[173]

After the convention, SDS began to issue a membership bulletin in order to widen SDS influence, to connect close ties with the chapters, and to make an open discussion of the 'living' document. Instantly, two serious projects were also put forth: SDS University Reform Project and Peace Research and Education Project. The SDS University Reform Project aimed to stimulate "basic research and discussion by students on the present nature of university education in America" including the topics such as "the role of University in society, the impact of the Cold War on the University and the potential of the University to act as an agent of social change."[174]

Peace Research and Education Project mainly aimed to influence the policy makers, to improve their ability "to cope with world problems without the use of violence."[175] But this was a hard task. Thus, in practice, the project was more intended to such issues as to direct students' "research interests and educational efforts toward the problems of peace." It also sought for "improving the intellectual and technical competence of peace activists" and a "reform of university curricula toward education on peace problems."[176] The Peace Research and Education Project proved to be the most successful project of SDS. This was mainly due to the fact that there was a great appeal for a peace movement both among students and other dissident groups. What it called for was clear and was open to some other sections of the American society. The success was in terms of

---

[173] Ibid.
[174] Betty Garman, "SDS University Reform Project," *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No: 1.
[175] Richard Flacks, "Peace Research and Education Project," *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No: 1.
[176] Ibid.

stimulating an activism, which was relatively easier to achieve. Even in 1965, when The Peace Research and Action Project became dominant by organizing the Vietnam protests, it still neither aimed at revolutionary social reform, nor targeted some deeply rooted paradoxes of the American society.

However, University Reform Project, which aimed at long-term achievements in comparison to PREP, had no suitable circumstances to advance. Al Haber argued that the main problem was its vague conception. In fact, "the series of mailings and conferences it was to produce would clarify its direction."[177] But they were never held. Haber, with another SDS member called Barbara Jacobs, argued in a letter to SDS members that the project would collapse due to the deficiencies within a much more fundamental issue; that was SDS organizing policy:

> We believe that it is foolish for us to expect to have a voice in remote local activity unless there are SDS people on the local scene to give our ideas visibility and to push the services of a central SDS office. Here, again, the project emphasis must shift to local organization, around which to focus our intellectual program.[178]

What Al Haber and Barbara Jacobs cautioned against was the attitude of the national staff, most of whom defined the problems of SDS as caused by the deficiencies of the center. There was a potential among the students to become SDS members, but SDS still didn't have a program that was directed to local organization. The task concluded at the Port Huron Convention was "to transform SDS from a circle of friends into a membership organization."[179] But without the energies directed to the issues of local organization, membership communication,

---

[177] Al Haber and Barbara Jacobs. "From Al Haber and Barbara Jacobs," letter to SDS members, December, 15, 1962.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Ibid.

and fundraising, SDS would continue to remain as a leadership organization rather than a membership organization, as Haber and Jacobs wrote to the SDS members:

> What was the National Council supposed to do? It was to put organizational responsibility in the hands of chapters and associated group people—So that our program thinking might represent the real needs of the local scene… It was to include observers from the numerous non-SDS but friendly groups around the country, as well as fraternal delegates from national and regional organizations. It was to invite people from the publications, student and adult, with whom we are friendly or to which we look for significant view.
>
> … (But) it didn't occupy prominence in general correspondence, there was no focusing or chapter and local attention to it, and to our knowledge there were no special invitations sent out.[180]

However, even fundraising was in itself a serious problem. At the time, SDS had even no "sufficient funds to keep a stock of Port Huron Statements on hand for use at conferences and on local campuses."[181] There was no support from the members to get work done. The so-called parent body LID was "near broke, even minimal operating funds have been non-existent or only infrequently available"[182] from it. The only project getting some support was PREP. But for the national staff, the main reason for this was a lack of initiative. Haber argued that there were people, mainly adult small contributors who were both willing and able to make support. But again there was a lack of effective communication, which led to the fact that SDS could not express its needs to those adult sponsors. For instance, "project proposals were not written up and sent to foundations."[183] The same situation existed on the issue of chapters and local organizing. The national staff clarified it in a letter to SDS members in the late 1962:

---

[180] Ibid.
[181] *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No: 2, 1962-63. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No. 19.
[182] "From Al Haber and Barbara Jacobs."
[183] Ibid.

> Too often national officers and national meetings blame lack of financial stability for our inability to organize. Rather, the opposite is true, we suspect: we cannot raise money because we do not have chapters doing things. Chapters can be started with little or no local money and a minimum resource help from the national office—mostly literature. What is needed is an investment of time and effort on the part of individual SDS members. We must get into our communities—whether those be the student bodies, particular areas of cities, work groups, or whatever—to promulgate ideas and stimulate action[184]

Yet, for the national staff, what SDS needed most was to open the way for the local supply. Adult sponsors and organizational business could not be permanent sponsors. For a long term SDS activity, it was necessary to have serious local organizing not only because it had to be membership oriented, but also because that was the only way to get permanent financial support.

Haber's proposition, which argued that SDS was in isolation, and thus, there were no serious works or projects carried out, and there was no permanent financial support, was shared by most of the other members. But there was disagreement on the solution. Haber believed that, about the problem, he finally settled the proper question "that the basic unit of the organization was to be the local chapter or associated group."[185] In the mind of Haber, local chapters meant a constituency on the campus, and the problems of membership meant simply the problems of campus organizing. From the beginning, Haber conceived SDS as a campus based organization with the primary aim of rendering the dissident groups and students with significant intellectual development. Student activism would have to be the result of an intellectual workforce, and not a result of spontaneous outrage. The latter choice would result with a waste of energy:

---

[184] SDS National Stuff, "To SDS members," *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No: 3, 1962-63. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

[185] "From Al Haber and Barbara Jacobs."

> In fact our intellectual workforce has been expanded little in the fall. We don't set up functioning advisory boards and do not try to convince people with research in progress to direct their expertise in terms of our various strategic conceptions. The schemes we design as political theorists and activists, fall on us also to implement as scholars, researchers and educators. We can't do both; we don't have time for both; and we can't be good, simultaneously, at both.[186]

Although Haber and Jacobs reminded SDS members that their assertion was "not to press for a back-to-campus-let's-educate-the-sophomores approach,"[187] it stressed that the two distinct tendencies rooted within SDS became apparent. Some SDS members believed that, in America, the class struggles of the 1930s did not cease at all, but were "diverted into new, unexplored channels, with completely new forms and effects."[188] There were still existed "large numbers of Americans" who were "composed of minority groups, and the technological unemployed" and they constituted "dispossessed economic groups"[189] that Michael Harrington told in his *The Other America*. The technological unemployed were the result of "automation, the process of machines replacing men in performing sensory."[190] In the Port Huron Statement, it was argued that, together with the post-war recessions, this economic situation had severe consequences on citizens: "five million becomes an acceptable unemployment tabulation, and misery, uprootedness, and anxiety become the lot of increasing numbers of Americans."[191]

For Hayden what was needed was "a way to transform these invisible rebellions into a politics of responsible insurgence rooted in community after

---

[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Jim Williams, "Notes on the Port Huron Statement," *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No: 4, 1962-63. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.
[189] Ibid.
[190] *Port Huron Statement*.
[191] Ibid.

community," by "speaking in comprehensible terms to the felt needs of their locales, offering specific alternatives to specific problems of inequality, industrial stagnation, inadequate schools, civil defense."[192] This meant that SDS should target the individuals outside the campus, developing among the poor people a consciousness of political dissent.

Thus, Haber was right in complaining that there was not yet a consensus on what it meant to be SDS member in terms of vision. It was apparent that there was not a single, operating vision of SDS that was approved among the national staff and prominent members. While he rushed for creating "a real confederation of campus and community based radicals" to achieve a national new left organizing, there were some others who thought rather differently. Paul Booth, a prominent SDS member at the time, offered to "avoid permanent reform in the mechanics of the system," which Haber planned to achieve with his Professionals and Social Change Project.[193] Booth asserted that to encourage permanent citizen participation in the body politic among the potentially dissident groups was the surest way for social reform. His political reform proposal offered to imitate southern activism:

> The realignment of the sixties and seventies will displace Dixiecrats from political control of their political fiefs through militant organization, registration, and the use of political power of the organized vote. The civil rights movement will, with other liberal forces in the South, force the Dixiecrats into the national conservative (Republican) party, and the force of the organized vote (the political scientists will call the civil rights movement a 'pressure group') will be the mechanism.[194]

---

[192] Tom Hayden, untitled document, *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No: 4.
[193] Paul Booth, "On Realignment," *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No: 4.
[194] Ibid.

The underlying assumption in Booth's proposal was that the white poor and white students were not faced with such a problem as voter registration, and thus, they would have no difficulty in following the patterns of southern activism. To a certain degree, Hayden shared Booth's beliefs. Explicitly, he was against Haber's vision. For Hayden, SDS had already achieved enough organizational power to cope with the current situation of American politics. The activist spirit of the sixties provided the appropriate circumstances for SDS to involve immediately in active politics. Otherwise, the organization would inevitably assign "to a vague educational role in society that increasingly (was) built deaf to the sounds of protest."[195] The most urgent issue to deal was the new Administration's attempt to form a loyal political base in the large cities for the future. Against this, he offered to "create genuinely independent political constituencies who (would) not be satisfied with the New Frontier."[196] This required directing the organization's energies to off-campus people and to apply the methods of SNCC. Haber thought that this was a self delusion and was to give SDS a practical direction "without a visible base" which would make the organization's "strategic conceptions manifest on the local level."[197] SDS members simply tended "to ride the action work of others" rather than to "serve as initiators or as effective educators within the action framework set by others."[198]

These discussions intensified in the beginning of 1964, when the Economic and Research Action Project (ERAP) was proposed. There emerged two truly distinct camps within SDS on the question of on-campus versus off-campus

---

[195] Hayden, untitled document, *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No: 4.
[196] Ibid.
[197] "From Al Haber and Barbara Jacobs".
[198] Ibid.

activity. It was a time for a serious decision among the two options. The decision was crucial because it would determine where to spend the limited energy and money SDS had. As a consequence, ERAP project was initiated. Hayden was among the defenders of the project and in this crucial decision; his influence was again a decisive factor.

CHAPTER 3

ERAP effect on SDS

During the period from late 1963 to 1964, SDS went through a crucial development and clarified its vision. This development involved a visible shift from some of the early SDS objectives. This shift can be formulated with the content of an actual debate that took on within the organization and pervaded the whole aforementioned period. This shift signifies the most crucial process that SDS has undergone in its history. Much of the later disappointments on the organizational nature of students were the result of the decisions taken during this debate. In general terms, the main issue of the debate was to choose between on-campus and off-campus organizing as the priority of SDS. But more specifically and implicitly, the concern of the debate was a vital dilemma: to what degree SDS would be an organization with a loose organizational structure. This dilemma was closely related with the application of participatory democracy within SDS groups, which in a sense required a loose structure. For Al Haber, SDS needed disciplined and continuous communicational bonds between the national office and all the local chapters. This also required a harmony between these bases in terms of both vision and course of action until SDS succeeded in its educational objectives. As

the mood of off-campus organizing highlighted the experimental approaches such as practicing the participatory democracy, many members turned away from dealing with the task of creation of a reformist structure within educational institutions and professional areas. The only mutual concern among the students became the values and some immediate issues like peace protests, direct action against discrimination, and organizing the poor around economic issues.

The on-campus versus off-campus debate had been held theoretically from the earliest stages of SDS. But when the Economic Research and Action Project was proposed in September, 1963, and found a wide support from most of the newly recruited members, SDS came to a turning point in terms of its course of practice. Originally ERAP was introduced as an educational organization to teach to the college people radical economics and trade union principles in order to render them with a radical vision on American economic system. Soon after, its direction was totally changed when Hayden and Carl Witmann proposed that an interracial community organizing among poor whites and blacks would be the priority of ERAP. ERAP was in a sense a reply to Haber's call for serious projects and proposals but the vision behind it was totally opposite to his approach. With Haber, some other SDS members felt a disappointment as ERAP began to dominate SDS. The main problem was that ERAP mainly "attracted activists whose main priority was not the health and viability of national SDS, or any national organization."[199] Worst of all, some of the most influential and effective figures within the SDS had a similar mood.

---

[199] Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left*, p. 81.

The next SDS convention after Port Huron was held on June 15, 1963 in Pine Hill, New York. The importance of the conference was that there emerged an alternative manifesto to the Port Huron Statement. Its title was "America and the New Era" and written by Dick Flacks, an important SDS member who had a primary role in initiating ERAP. "America and the New Era" was a reflection of emerging of a new concern and vision among some SDS members. Most of the issues and the context described in this new manifesto were similar to the ones in the Port Huron Statement. The remarkable difference was that the new document argued that the movement should embrace other sections of the society. The agents of social change should not be only the students. The circumstances of the Cold War period proved that the ordinary people, especially the poor and the unemployed masses should take the initiative in making social reform. The main issue was "the technological revolution occurring in the post-war period," which "created a new type of automated production."[200] This caused that the "the need for workers was being reduced," and the problems it created were increased by a "radical increase in the number of people needing jobs as taking place, due to the coming of age of millions of young people born during the war-time baby boom."[201] Then, the immediate problem within throughout the country was unemployment. But the immediate problem of SDS was not only the unemployment, but also the New Frontier program initiated the Kennedy Administration in order to cope with the unemployment. In the document, the New Frontier was criticized as trying to retain the status quo:

---

[200] Dick Flacks, *America and the New Era*.
[201] Ibid.

> This, then, is the essential shape of the Establishment as it strives to respond to the new era—it intends to be rational, active, and adaptive, but its policies and style flow from its necessary commitment to the preservation of the going system.[202]

The implicit worry about the New Frontier was that it would become dominant and would marginalize the movement. As some SDS members thought, the New Frontier was in a sense a response to the increasingly strengthening social movements of the sixties, and aimed to keep other sections of the society away from them, a strategy which was thought to diminish the power of the movement as a whole and to highlight the status quo against the demands for genuine democracy. The solution was that SDS should concentrate on the issue of poverty and unemployment with the aim of radicalizing those people. The document warns that the New Frontier would satisfy some of the immediate demands of the poor, but as a consequence, would end the possibilities of healthy reform:

> When consensus is manipulated, when reform emanates from the top while active movements for change are described, then the process of democratic participation has been defeated. In the short run, efforts to dampen social conflict and prevent popular upsurge limit drastically the possibilities for real reform and innovation in the society. In the long run, the encroachment of the engineered consensus will permanently frustrate the long human struggle to establish a genuinely democratic community.[203]

Actually, ERAP was the result of this statement. ERAP was not a simple project that solely aimed to develop living standards of the poor. There were diverse motives behind ERAP. Most of these determining factors were formulated by Hayden in the pamphlet "An Interracial Movement of the Poor?" which he wrote with Carl Wittman and issued in 1963. The importance of this document

---

[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.

was that it reshaped the ERAP, clarified its motives, its aims and the causes of its urgency. Apart from the New Frontier's implications, there was a significant caution in the document about the ongoing situation of movement, which justified immediate action on organizing an interracial cooperation between the black and white poor: there was "a kind of black nationalism"[204] arising within the movement, especially among the unemployed black people where "the automation of traditional low-skill work (caused) the greater isolation of the ghetto-dwelling Negro from the world of white people."[205] As the racial militancy of the black movement grew, it began "dividing the traditional Negro-labor-white-liberal coalition, particularly in Northern cities."[206] This was a serious danger to the movement, and in this sense, one of the motives behind ERAP was the urgent need to stop this situation.

At the time, there was an organized struggle against poverty and unemployment among the blacks. However, on the part of the poor whites, there was an alienation and apathy, which "was subordinate to a common interest which happened to be central to the lives of black and white factory workers."[207] But there was on the other hand a potential for cooperation. Carl Wittman witnessed a coalition between blacks and students in Chester, Pennsylvania, that would gave the inspiration for ERAP direction:

> In the fall, the local Youth Chapter of the NAACP had begun to organize pickets, marches and petitions in conjunction with students from Swarthmore. They acted in support of a thirty-seven-point of platform, which included demands for fair

---

[204] Tom Hayden and Carl Wittman, "An Interracial Movement of the Poor?" SDS Microfilm, Series 4.B, No. 151.

[205] Ibid.

[206] Todd Gitlin, "President's Report," *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No.7. April 1964. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No. 19.

[207] Hayden and Wittman, "An Interracial Movement of the Poor?"

> and full employment, new housing, new schools, and fair police practices. In November, more than 200 Chester blacks and 50 students were arrested at demonstrations before the city agreed to meet some of their demands and drop charges against protesters. In the aftermath, several militant neighborhood organizations were established, again with the help of students.[208]

By basing their argument on this example, Hayden and Wittman thought that, to define common interests would unite the poor blacks and poor whites. This common interest was that both sides had marginal or insecure economic roles in the society. The 1963 National Convention was decisive in choosing this ERAP direction. Yet there was no more than a few proposals on the project. But there was clearly a new mood; a new enthusiasm nourished by the sense of going through real work outside the campus. There was a steadily growing appeal for ERAP among the students and this appeal was mainly caused by that sense.

Apart from political concerns, ERAP was also a result of an overstatement about the potentials of the organization on one hand and the result of a need to prove to the other communities that SDS was a living, active organization. At the end of 1963 there was a widespread recognition of SDS among both the other radical organizations and liberal groups. But as the new president of SDS, Todd Gitlin explained, the organization was yet identified solely with its leadership and this caused the fact that, the identity of SDS officers was better known than what they did; and this was true even among the remote members. This was mainly due to a lack of serious and comprehensive projects, as Haber all the time stressed. But Haber's main concern was that the need for projects was due to a need to create close ties among the members. But to Gitlin, projects were needed because SDS members were often hard pressed by the other groups to explain exactly what they

---

[208] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 188.

were doing. There was clearly a pressure on the SDS from the other dissident organizations: the recognition and support was conditional, and SDS had to contribute seriously to the ongoing activist movement. In this sense, Gitlin warned in his report in February 1964 that SDS should immediately create a genuine contribution in terms of activism in order to explain to the others what SDS meant:

> Not our conception of the movement, not a scheme for social change, not an ideology of participatory democracy, not a group of intellectuals gifted with the perception that certain social issues connect with each other, but what activities, present and projected, are specifically and uniquely those of SDS.[209]

1963 was the year that SDS triumphed dramatically on the issue of attendance and participation. In December, 1963, there were 25 chapters with over 725 dues-paying members. As the organization grew rapidly, there inevitably began close interactions with liberal and radical communities. Most of the new members had ties with other groups and therefore there was an influence. But most importantly, those members took their involvement in those other groups more seriously than their involvement in SDS. This was due to the fact that SDS was not an activist organization yet. Most of the old staff was aware of the fact that there was a great potential of membership due to the influence of the Port Huron Statement. But to take an active direction was necessary in order to keep the members and benefit from this potential. The national secretary Lee Webb pointed out this situation in his report in December 1963:

> I want SDS to be an organization that is an initiator of the intellectual and action projects that have been the most successful aspects of our organization. For too long, we have been a parasite on the more active organizations, i.e. SNCC and

---

[209] Todd Gitlin, "President's Report," in *SDS Bulletin*, No: 5, February 1964. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No. 19.

> NSM. Thus, many of our members when they want action either leave SDS, or at least work in another organization.[210]

In this context, what SDS should do was obvious: to create its own peculiar national action project. Like Hayden and Wittman, Webb pointed out that it was quite possible to organize the black and white community for a single cause. The cause was economic empowerment, the project was ERAP, and the role of SDS was to be the catalytic force. Webb significantly pointed out that no other group was doing this urgent job.

This enthusiasm and excitement for the redefined ERAP project overwhelmed the SDS National Council that met in December, 1963, in New York City. This meeting was a turning point: the divisions inherent within the organization finally sharpened at this meeting. This led to an intense debate and struggle on the direction of SDS. The main concern was to determine whether SDS would be an on-campus organization stressing a long-termed educational nature or an off-campus organization that would deal with the immediate political and economic issues concerning not only the students but the whole society. An off-campus organization meant also that SDS would be a loose organization embracing the activist masses and therefore its primary role would be to become a catalytic force. ERAP was the means to achieve this notion. Therefore, it was the primary task of the off-campus defenders and in this way it was the center of discussion. On-camps defenders argued that ERAP brought with it the danger that within this notion SDS would loose its identity. This issue was the chief dilemma of SDS. It was more or less inherent within the organization from the earliest stages; it particularly emerged when Hayden began to take full participation in

---

[210] Lee Webb, "National Secretary's Report 12/63." SDS Microfilm, Series 2.A, No.6.

SDS and continued up to the 1965-66 period. In 1965, it came to a final conclusion, but not suddenly. The events and the mood of the 1963-64 period explicitly expressed that SDS would be an off-campus organization. During this period, there was a great appeal for this among both the new members and a large portion of the old members and leaders. In 1965 most of the members clearly announced that they favored participating in off-campus issues:

> Dickie Magidoff, an SDS activist, laid out the choices facing SDS. He said that they could choose to see SDS as the growing manifestation of the movement or as something much larger that was molded in different ways at the local levels on which it operated. If the first alternative were the case, then organizational questions were paramount and SDS should make every effort to formalize, integrate and deal with these questions. Magidoff found the second alternative more attractive because it emphasized the most exciting part of the movement, its local dynamism, creativity and diversity…. He acknowledged, too, that the first alternative was more challenging because it required discipline if they were to "build a conscious left in this country."[211]

Magidoff's account clearly reflects the mood of the SDS members during the period. What they wanted was immediate active participation in politics of the real world, and to instantly prove themselves that they were changing something within the American society and American politics. This without doubt was an emotional attitude, they were mostly angry, but it turned into a hope as the movement provided them the possibility to change something. The main influence of SDS on them was not that they would be radicals, but that SDS made them "excited by the idea of toppling the American society."[212]

One of the most important facts that made that National Council Meeting important was that the discussions on ERAP led to a reconsideration of the

---

[211] Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left*, p. 86.
[212] Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, p. 190.

existence of SDS. As far as SDS went on to be a nationally centered organization ignoring many of the social problems at the local level, this would alienate many of the fresh members who sought for action. Many of the ERAP defenders would soon argue that ERAP should be an independent organization leaving SDS on its own. Consequently many of the ERAP defenders imposed to the others two main lines about the future of SDS: Either SDS would be a loose structural organization connecting itself with urgent problems of the whole people on the local level and thus give up its radical concerns, or otherwise ERAP defenders would disconnect ERAP from SDS. The debate went on during the 1963-64 school year and finally ended with the 1965 SDS National Convention.

The National Council Meeting was important not only because it was the actual starting point of this intense discussion, but at the meeting there also occurred a redistribution of power and influence on the part of the prominent figures. Until the meeting Al Haber was the ERAP director. However, as the nature of the project began to alarm him, he took an offensive attitude against the project. But he was oppressed by the group led by Hayden, which was intensely supported by most of the new members who were excited by the idea of taking real political action thanks to ERAP. Consequently Haber had to leave his ERAP directorship position to Rennie Davis who was a fervent ERAP defender. The implicit struggle between Haber and Hayden was finally concluded in favor of Hayden. Haber, who had been a permanent alternative to Hayden's visions, lost much of his influence and was about to leave the stage just like Harrington:

> For Haber, it was a painful moment. The organization that he had nursed to strength had spurned his advice. It was

> embarking on a new course of action that would inevitably leave him behind.[213]

The general mood after the meeting was enthusiasm. A celebration of the initiation of ERAP dominated aftermath of the meeting. During the 1963-64 school years, the number of SDS members doubled. In "A Short History of ERAP" Richard Rothstein reflected much of this new mood:

> The history of ERAP has been one of the most exciting annals of our movement. Constantly forced to revise strategy, constantly learning from the ghetto residents who really know what they need, ERAP organizers have been among the few in SDS who have tested theories of 'participatory democracy' in reality.[214]

For Rothstein, the importance lay in the fact that "the chief virtue of SDS in the last two years" had been "its insistence on relevance."[215] This was certainly a justification of the new direction. However, on the issue of recruitment and attendance, there was no need for a justification. No matter what the significance of ERAP was, there was a wide appeal among students. What this interest reflected was their search for authenticity and direct action on the political and social issues of the nation. Leaving the sterile campus atmosphere, and by committing themselves to community organizing among the poor, they "gladly lived at below subsistence conditions, working day and night at organizing."[216] From the same point of view, community organizing among the poor was an ethical action, which fulfilled the students' need to practically embrace the values. Hayden pointed out that "the ERAP spirit was one of voluntary poverty and simple living" for it was not possible to organize poor people "without living on their

---

[213] Ibid. p. 191.
[214] Richard Rothstein, "A Short History of ERAP." SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid.

economic level in their neighborhood."[217] Sharing shelters and meals was a common habit among the ERAP volunteers.

In February 1964, the SDS president Todd Gitlin implied that community work among poor was a natural part of SDS organization. A departure from the campus was clearly the dominant trend among students, a trend that would determine the future direction of SDS. However Gitlin thought that SDS was still a student organization and what the new trend implied was that SDS was going to be a monolithic student organization. The problem of SDS was not to decide between on-campus and off-campus organization any more. But it was rather "how to do real work outside the campus while maintaining educational and programmatic liaison with the campus."[218] Gitlin was clearly a bridge between the two camps. He argued that the two separate visions could be reconciled or could be pursued together:

> The hope is that a new variety of 'radical vocation', of off-campus work, will be created: one that requires full time dedication similar to that of SNCC field secretaries, yet one in which students can participate, if less actively, while still regarding the campus as their (temporary) home.[219]

But Gitlin's approach didn't prove to be enough to stop the debate. Deeply disappointed in the National Council Meeting, Haber immediately criticized both the ERAP defenders and Gitlin in March 1964:

> I am highly critical of the substance of such community work because it has been without radical direction, clarity of goals, or significant differentiation from liberal reform. And I am critical of its organizational role because it diverts us from more important things, ignores our role as a <u>student</u> organization

---

[217] Hayden, *Rebel*, p. 117.
[218] Gitlin, "President's Report," in *SDS Bulletin*, No: 5, February 1964.
[219] Ibid.

> and has become the base for an unfortunate anti-intellectualism in SDS.[220]

Haber believed that the ERAP vision was good, but its time was not appropriate. ERAP simply did not embrace the most important issues for the organization at the time. If for Haber the problem was about time, then Rennie Davis had a striking response. In June 1964, in his writing "ERAP Projects: Toward an Interracial Movement of the Poor", Davis cautioned that "without this effort to bring poor whites into loose alliance with the Negro freedom movement on economic issues," then the country faced "the alternative of increasing racial violence."[221] Clearly such an outcome would undermine SDS along with the whole movement no matter what direction SDS had.

To point out, Haber's above objection was rhetorical rather than rational. In spotting most of the urgent problems that the movement was about to face, ERAP defenders were right. It also proved that there were serious concerns and clarity within their goals. At the time, the movement was cornered and about to be marginalized not only because of the rise black nationalism but also by the policies of the administration. Gitlin warned that the Administration did not "look unkindly on that sector of domestic unrest" and it would soon have "its own 'community action' projects, its own 'year-round work projects.'"[222] If those programs succeeded, then the movement was marginalized and lost its power:

> The 'war on poverty' is also a 'war on us'; the glove has been cast and the battlefield chosen…. and we cannot fail to join the issue. Radicals cannot. For if radicals are not participants in

---

[220] Al Haber, "The National Council: A Reply to the President's Report," in *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No: 6. March 1964. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

[221] Rennie Davis, "ERAP Projects: Toward an Interracial Movement of the Poor," in *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No: 9. June 1964. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

[222] Gitlin, "President's Report," in *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No: 7. April 1964.

> mass movements, then assuredly the movements will be co-opted, or only chaos will result.[223]

Haber's objection was not limited to this rhetoric. His description of the mood of the 1963 National Council Meeting gave insights on the alarming symptom that SDS possessed with the initialization of its new philosophy and direction. There was almost no one at the meeting that attempted to instill in the new members and the staff the possibility of a critical approach to ERAP. The ERAP proposal was not practically opened to debate at all. This implied a shift from the earlier traditions of SDS, which were namely open discussion and full participation. Haber pointed out those crucial issues like "community involvement, the leap into the ghetto, a slighting of chapter work and analysis" were evaded and "were never seriously questioned." Significantly, the National Council "simply followed the enthusiasm of its more articulate members."[224] For Haber a habit of evading boring issues replaced the notion of full discussion with the new SDS. The community organization did not become the primary concern; it actually became the only concern. Haber argued that this would keep people with other talents and interests away from SDS. But it was mostly the boring issues that targeted the real and radical reform. As Haber continuously stated, the first step for such a reform was to educate the radicals, because this meant to seed a permanent reformist instincts in the people who would later became professionals in key positions. Community organizing was totally unrelated with this primary task. According to Haber:

> The cult of the ghetto has diverted SDS from its primary and most difficult task of educating radicals. It says 'come and

---

[223] Ibid.
[224] Al Haber, "The National Council: A Reply to the President's Report."

> do radical things'. But when the student decides he has to make living, SDS has given him no help in functioning as a radical in the middle class, professional world—whence he came, and to which, most likely, he will return.[225]

Jim Williams, a SDS member from the South also pointed out the abovementioned dismaying symptom within SDS. Williams complained that this symptom was causing SDS to shift from a mood participatory organization to a professional organization. This was the case in the ERAP: the old guard was defining the programs of the younger group and was imposing upon them their projects. It was not only due to the fact that the old guard within ERAP was so much devoted to their cause. The more important reason was that the younger groups, most of which were the new members, were "largely uneducated and ill-informed and hardly as sophisticated."[226] This kind of organization had been clearly rejected in the early stages of SDS and was the most respected difference from the old left. As Williams warned in May 1964:

> It is almost a sort of paternalism, which we would resent bitterly if it came from the LID, but which we practice ourselves without notice. Meanwhile it leads to the growing alienation of the younger groupings. This could mean that SDS could die in a very few years because the younger group lacks upward mobility, training, and political perspective.[227]

Like Haber, Williams complained that the reshaping of the ERAP project was made without consulting to the most of the members. ERAP was originally an educational organization that aimed to educate college students on trade union practices and economics. Its course was later changed and navigated to community action organizing among the poor. This change was made during the 1963

---

[225] Ibid.

[226] Jim Williams, "Reflections of a Southern Hillbilly SDSer," in *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No: 8. May 1964. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

[227] Ibid.

National Council Meeting which ended up by replacing Al Haber. Williams, giving account on what happened, concluded that SDS began to work like a professional organization where professional experts took the decision and imposed those decisions upon the lower position members.

However, this was true only in the case of reshaping ERAP project. After ERAP was initiated, SDS structure began to evolve in the opposite way. The local chapters were constructed, and soon after they immediately took autonomous courses of action. At the time there was a great attendance to SDS, but most of the members were not known by the national office. This was because only the dues-paying members could be recorded and most of the members were not paying their dues. In December, 1964, there were totally 2500 members recorded, but regardless of those there was a mass membership behind, who involved heavily on issues like community organizing, peace protests, discrimination, etc. SDS already had become the catalyst of a mass movement. For Paul Potter, SDS president of 1964-65 term, the potential they had helped to create was "too large to be captured completely by a still relatively small self-conscious radical community" and thus the movement became "too complicated to be dealt with the old and simple exhortation to action."[228] This was not a surprising outcome. By 1962, SDS faced a period of rapid, but unbalanced and uncontrolled growth. The growth was not caused from an organizational success; rather it was the outcome of great appeal from those whose main concern was a loose, uncommitted activism. Potter proposed that in the case of such mass involvement, SDS had to return taking its

[228] Paul Potter, "Which Way SDS?" in *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.3, No: 2. October 1964. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

educational role that would put "radical alternatives before students"[229] who were not acting radically. But educating others entailed that SDS had firstly to educate itself.

The crucial change in the structure of SDS did not result from its becoming a mass movement, but rather resulted from the response to that growth. In July, 1964, Potter made an important statement about the 1964 National Convention:

> A number of SDS venerable old guard came to the Convention feeling secure in the knowledge of the organization's phenomenal growth during the last two years and confident that they could step back from the positions of responsibility they had held for a number of years.[230]

Most of the old members intended to leave SDS informally but this was not only because they were confident about the organization's evolution. Some of them believed that SDS had become useless when compared to PREP and ERAP. SDS, as a national organization needed close communication between the members and leadership. This was almost impossible where a large sum of membership was attained and in this a sense the role of SDS became idling. Thus, some of the old leadership staff proposed to orient "to some new form of adult organization, fraternally tied to SDS but operating independently in a number of areas."[231] The problem was that the agents of social change were more seen as ERAP and PREP than SDS by many of the members. Thus, as an educational organization, SDS lost its influence, and much of its power was captured by ERAP and PREP. As Potter stated, those old leader who concentrated on ERAP also took with themselves "a number of the intellectual and organizational functions" that had

---

[229] Ibid.

[230] Paul Potter, "President's Views," in *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No: 10. July 1964. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

[231] Ibid.

"clustered around SDS" for a number of years. On the other hand, the other portion of the old guard, who defended SDS as an educational organization, had lost much of their influence within the organization. What remained in SDS was "a large number of new and uncommitted people" who saw themselves "as the formulators of its programs." As an educational centered organization, this marked an early dissolution of SDS. But to put it differently, it marked the inevitable change in the structure and navigation. This was inevitable because SDS was "what its members were, and its members were always changing."[232]

Tom Hayden was among those old guard members who wanted to leave SDS on its own and to concentrate on an independent ERAP. He left the national office and joined the Newark Chapter of ERAP, which aimed to organize the poor in the Clinton Hill section of Newark, New Jersey. His main concern was to "prove in action that an integrationist perspective stressing common economic interests could still work."[233] Carl Wittman offered him a place in Newark ERAP Project and Hayden accepted with enthusiasm.

The Newark ERAP Project was initiated in June, 1964, with cooperation between SDS, the National Committee for Full Employment (NCFE), and a Clinton Hill neighborhood group in Newark. The project's name was changed to Newark Community Union Project (NCUP). Financial resources were a board of trustees already present in Newark and NCFE who had granted $1000. The main target was to improve the living conditions of the poor, particularly housing. The urgent problem was that Clinton Hill Neighborhood was designated as a "blight area for destruction" as the city wanted "to replace the houses with a light

---

[232] Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left*, p. 86.
[233] Hayden, *Rebel*, p. 116.

industrial park."[234] This situation would both "cause inconvenience to residents" and "result in less jobs because the new factories would be almost totally automated."[235] NCUP members viewed that the urgent issue to deal in this context was the problem of housing, while Clinton Hill Neighborhood Association saw the problem of unemployment as the priority.

NCUP was put into practice with "a core group of about 35-50 community people, working within a structure of a neighborhood-wide group, six block groups and six house-wide tenant councils."[236] NCUP members evaded the main concern of the Clinton Hill Neighborhood Association, and concentrated their energies on the issue of housing. The rents were very high and the Housing Commission worked by graft. The situation was about to be worse as many of the poor residents would be deprived of their houses after the destruction and would need houses to rent. The urgent need was to diminish the rent prices and to improve the services. Thus the program mainly included rent strikes, and some legal actions legalizing and supporting the rent strikes.

Before arriving in Newark, the main aim of the NCUP members was to organize poor blacks and whites under mutual concerns. This plan was actually constructed under the false assumption that "the Clinton Hill neighborhood was racially integrated in makeup."[237] But the case was rather different in Clinton Hill: "only the eastern, or lower, half of the area could in any sense be called poor—the rest was working- and middle-class, mostly Negro also."[238] Whites constituted only 10% of the total population, where 85% were blacks and 5% were Puerto

---

[234] *Report: Newark Project*. SDS Microfilm, Series 2.B, No.2.
[235] Ibid.
[236] *Summer Report: Newark Community Union, 1964*. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.B, No.154.
[237] Hayden, *Rebel*, p. 117.
[238] *Summer Report: Newark Community Union, 1964.*

Rican. Thus, in a city where over half of the population were blacks and Puerto Rican, there was virtually no white unemployment except one or two areas. This made NCUP members change their plan. As Hayden later remembered:

> In fact, the whites tended to be middle class and lived on the avenues high on the hill, while the blacks were poor and lived at the bottom. The city's poor whites lived in the East Ward; we were in the South. We decided to stay in Clinton Hill, regardless of our being mainly white, and made long-range plans to target the East Ward, plans which were ultimately carried out in the late sixties.[239]

Although there was an apparent racial imbalance in the NCUP group, it was welcomed by the residents. Initially, only one of the members was black, and most of the members had middle-class origins. However, both the old members of the Neighborhood Council and the newly organized black people accepted these members. In the case of any hostility and attack from some liberal or nationalist black groups, "neighborhood people defended the white staff instead of capitulating to the race-baiting" of those groups.[240]

But to organize the people was a difficult task. NCUP strategy followed two lines: activism and education. Among the poor black residents there was "practically no consciousness of any political motion outside their own lives, except for a vague feeling for the southern freedom movement."[241] There was the problem of political identification with white activists. The intimate mood and heavy political approach of the activists separated them "clearly from any other would-be organizers, missionaries, or social workers these poor had ever seen."[242] But there was another significant difference; instead of "looking down on them, the

---

[239] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 117.
[240] *Summer Report: Newark Community Union, 1964.*
[241] Ibid.
[242] Hayden, *Rebel*, p. 120.

activists applied their skills "in a process of 'looking up,' searching for answers from their experience instead of from experts."[243] Activism followed the pattern of rent strikes and small demonstrations. Soon many of the hosts recognized the intimacy and commitment of the white activists and began either to support or to take active participation. By November 1964, approximately 300 people were "directly participating in some way" while publicity reached "a clear majority of the 25,000 residents of the project area."[244] Educational efforts were concentrated on full discussion on the issues such as welfare, schools, unemployment, recreation, political coalitions with other groups and other neighborhoods. But this was a difficult task, especially when it was the case with angry an oppressed people. Hayden remembers that "petty, emotional feelings often kept people from working together" such as "parental hostility toward lifestyle of young people,… or a homeowners' tendency to blame welfare mothers for their problems."[245] The causes of social ill were seen in such individual cases and within the nearest scenes. The educational efforts mainly targeted to change this attitude and to develop a community spirit among those people:

> We would encourage one person after another at meetings to talk about specific problems until they were all shaking their heads in agreement and a *system* of collective abuse had become apparent. Thus, the first step was in transferring blame from oneself to institutions. In addition, through the therapeutic experience of speaking out after so many years of voicelessness, a sense of pride and ability could begin to grow. Our work was to encourage this process, through which the people we had organized became organizers themselves. Our leadership had to be transformed into theirs.[246]

---

[243] Ibid., p. 120.
[244] *Summer Report: Newark Community Union, 1964*.
[245] Hayden, *Rebel*, p. 120.
[246] Ibid., p. 120.

NCUP continued its efforts in Newark until the Newark Riot began on July 12, 1967. The police arrested a black cab driver named John Smith on that night. His fault was driving the wrong way down a one-way street. John Smith was "badly beaten in the course of the arrest, leaving him with broken ribs and a split scalp."[247] Civil rights leaders soon heard of the arrest and beating and immediately came to the police office demanding that he should be taken to hospital. This was a routine event in Newark, where the policemen, mostly of Irish and Italian descent had been regularly chasing blacks with violent means. This time, however it was not only the civil rights leaders who became involved in the case. An angry crowd of blacks assembled in front of the office. As no dissolution was achieved, thousands of people, objecting harshly to the compromising mood of the civil rights leaders, began a riot that night. By "ripping iron bars off storefronts, smashing windows, and loading their arms with tape recorders, toasters, televisions, clothing, and bottles of liquor,"[248] the ghetto crowd responded to the oppression they had been facing for a long time in the city. However, there was even no one injured and there was no fight. After 48 hours of looting, New Jersey Governor Richard Hughes came to Newark "with four thousand virtually all-white National Guardsmen and five hundred state troopers to relieve Newark's thirteen hundred police."[249] A violent repressing of rioters resulted with 23 people dead, 725 people injured, and 1500 people arrested.

The events proved that a new climax of a movement among blacks was emerging. The civil rights movement achieved nothing even on the part of jurisdiction: white authorities were still killing the blacks for stealing the property,

[247] Ibid., p. 139.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid., p. 140.

violently punishing any attempts of rebellion. The Newark Riot was clearly a response to the uselessness of the nonviolent tactics in an urban ghetto situation. During 1967, the civil rights movement rapidly lost its influence and left the stage to militant black power. As its fate had been heavily determined by the influence of the civil rights movement, community organizing efforts in Newark all collapsed:

> The explosive days of July exhausted the dreams of the early sixties and climaxed the period of NCUP's vitality. Traditional arrangements in the city were nullified by the upheaval. The new period would be symbolized by the cry of "black power." This rising nationalism, already stirring before the events of July, took on irreversible strength after the bloodshed. The crisis had revealed a nearly universal white apathy to black fate. The days were winding down when credible blacks would be able to work closely with whites as partners in common cause. A resurgence of separatism, always present in black history, was becoming the foreboding alternative to interracial alliances.[250]

However, NCUP efforts in Newark did not prove to be useless at all. Certainly a redistribution of power to the poor was not achieved. A certain sense of community spirit was achieved although among a very few people. A few accomplishments occurred as a result of the pressure upon slumlords, city inspectors, the welfare office, judges, police, and City Council members. Some of them were fired from their offices as a result of abuse, uncovered by the NCUP. The most important success was the election of Kenneth Gibson as mayor—the first black mayor of Newark.

---

[250] Ibid., p. 146.

CONCLUSION

Students for a Democratic Society was formed as an educational organization in 1959 as the youth chapter of LID. The main concern was to educate college students in order to make them sophisticated radicals. With this approach Al Haber—the founder of SDS—hoped to influence a majority of students who would later become middle-class professionals in various key positions. The social reform, which SDS sought, would emerge when most of those positions were filled with radical and reformist professionals. In this perspective, the students were not the agents for social change. They were the professionals who would make the reform and students were important as far as they would later become professionals. The goal that the founders of SDS strived after was a radical social reform; the key concept of this radical reform was the extension of democratic values and institutions. Some socialist concerns were also inherent in SDS from the very beginning. On-campus organizing was the key strategy and collectivism was an inseparable part of both on-campus organizing and community organizing outside the campus.

In making SDS an effective organization, what Haber relied on was the potential of students to become serious and committed radicals. Many of the students were restless, and they were bored as the result of the affluent but

automated way of life during the Cold War era. Many of them were in search of any kind of authentic purpose that would give a meaning to their lives. There was a critical approach among some of them to the problems of the nation as a result of this restlessness. Haber's purpose was to make them full time radicals dedicated to the particular purpose of "reform from within." This purpose was quite different from the current activities of the influential civil rights movement.

But in the course of its development period, SDS did not follow the line that Al Haber proposed. Haber created close relations with SNCC and some competent individuals already active within the movement. His plan was to recruit new members and some influential figures that would be useful in improving SDS. However this plan soon haunted him because the recruited members brought with them quite different visions. When new members who defended direct action came, Haber's ideas were marginalized within SDS. The loose leadership structure of the organization prevented him from overpowering the new visions: SDS was principally open to full discussion among all the members; the notion of leadership was quite different from the older tradition. Voting was replaced with collective decision making. The role of the leadership was limited to organizing.

Tom Hayden's recruitment was the decisive factor in changing SDS direction. He was a key factor in gathering people around SDS, and this was the reason why Haber insisted on recruiting him. But Hayden's concern was far from Haber's idea of creating an effective, long term educational organization. What he attempted to do was to invoke in the powerless groups the sense of participatory democracy and leave them with their own leadership. One of the aims of ERAP was this purpose. In this sense, Hayden's concern was to experiment with participatory democracy and he urgently took this mission. Thus, it can be said that

the notion of immediate participatory democracy prevented other serious SDS notions to be put into practice.

More significantly, Hayden's influence also included the SNCC notion, which was direct and immediate activism against segregation and racism. His influence by SNCC was a key factor both in turning SDS into a mass movement and rendering it a new direction other than an educational one. With Hayden, SDS focused to influence not only the students, but also all the ordinary people. By community organizing he tried to affect the political and social structure from the bottom up. Participatory democracy aimed to enable people to make their own decisions and to take back the power from the so-called Military-Industrial Complex:

> I think that by focusing the movement on the monopolized decision making in the country, everywhere, you get at the heart of the problem. You also begin to build a new identity for people who are in the movement.[251]

Hayden's central concern shifted to ERAP from SDS. Soon ERAP gained an independence from SDS and aimed to become a more comprehensive organization. ERAP organizers like Richard Rothstein offered a new vision in which "the Peace Research and Education Project could easily become separate but overlapping forms open to students as well as 'adults' while still keeping a working connection to an SDS student-centered program."[252]

Taking the initiative on their own, ERAP organizers redefined the movement. It became a movement of interracial community organizing among the poor, leaving SDS with its own fate. The notion of education was still important

---

[251] Tom Hayden, "Prophet of the Powerless," interview by Ben Reade. SDS Microfilm, Series 2.B, No.78.

[252] Rothstein, "A Short History of ERAP."

but it should be met "within the active fibers of the movement itself."[253] ERAP resulted in the fact that most of the effective and brilliant SDS members left SDS to focus on direct activism and community organizing issues. This was more like SNCC than SDS. In SDS, when the old talented staff disconnected itself and left its place to new and unqualified members, SDS faced an informal dissolution after 1964. Most of these members also celebrated ERAP, it was attractive to the activists and was a genuinely radicalizing experience.

No matter what the significance of ERAP was, the wide appeal among students reflected their search for authenticity and direct action on the political and social issues of the nation. Leaving the sterile campus atmosphere, and by committing themselves to community organizing among the poor, they "gladly lived at below subsistence conditions, working day and night at organizing."[254] This mood was what the new left meant to the many of the young participants; not a political analysis but a response to "a cultural and psychological need."[255]

Also, ERAP was an important political experience for those students involved in it. In practice, the bureaucracies in local levels "taught them the need to confront, rather than try to reform from within, the controlling institutions of American life."[256] But this radicalizing process was no more than to have an experience on the conditions of those institutions and on directly and urgently confronting them. ERAP was the reflection of the new SDS attitude: social reform should come immediately from direct action.

---

[253] Hayden and Wittman, "An Interracial Movement of the Poor?"

[254] Rothstein, "A Short History of ERAP."
[255] Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s*, p. 58.
[256] Ibid., p. 60.

ERAP was also the reflection of some SDS members' intention of widening their movement. SDS should be a force which explored for "many of its allies within the liberal institutions" and it should "involve cooperative relationships and perhaps even mergers with various civil rights, peace, labor, student and other groups."[257] Most of those members had coinciding political concerns with such other groups, but particularly with the civil rights movement. These members were the majority within SDS, and significantly SDS closely related itself with the civil rights groups such as SNCC. This soon proved that the future of SDS as an organization became closely bounded with the destiny of SNCC.

Tom Hayden was the decisive factor in rendering this navigation to SDS. What made him an activist was his concern with SNCC and when he was recruited for SDS, he preserved the deep influence he got from the SNCC activists. His main plan in SDS was to apply SNCC methods in the North. The attitude of community organizing was an attempt to apply these non-violent methods based on direct action. There were several factors that helped Hayden to dominate SDS and put his vision into action. Firstly, he was very successful in articulating his vision and connecting it with the current concerns of the students—especially connecting this vision with the students' alienation. Another important thing was that there was no strict formal leadership in SDS but there was still a need for a leadership. Due to the lack of strict leadership, there was a lack of initiation in organizational issues. When most of the members were lost in endless theoretical debates about what to do, Hayden was an exception; he was an initiator and organizer who immediately acted. In this situation, he became the natural leader.

---

[257] Rothstein, "A Short History of ERAP."

Another factor was that Hayden's vision was perfectly reflecting the concerns of affiliated student masses. Al Haber was a theorist; he was creating totally new and usually difficult strategies for social reform, while what Hayden did was to reshape the mutual concerns of those masses and to a degree, to manipulate their ideas.

Tom Hayden and the defenders of ERAP opened the way for decentralization in SDS. Off-campus organizing dictated to localize all of the chapters, and often to include adults in the organization. Experiments in participatory democracy in many chapters brought independence. The 1965 National Convention was an attempt to solve this dilemma. An off-campus orientation had already been settled strongly and what came out in the convention were the questions of the structure and the direction of off-campus orientation. The Convention proved not only that SDS as an educational organization with strong communicational network was ceasing, but that ERAP was also losing its efficiency and influence. Most new members defended off-campus orientation, but they also heavily pressed for a complete dissolution of centralized structure:

> A shared and growing opposition to national structure and an emphasis on local initiative was brought in with the new breed of recruits and reflected in the politics of the SDS National Convention in 1965, the first convention after the anti-war demonstration earlier that spring. The strong assertion of participatory democracy and anti-centralism accompanying the expansion of the movement is explained by the experience and outlook of the newer membership. They had much less political outlook than the older and original members of SDS as most of the old guard, with similar politics, had turned their efforts to community organizing.[258]

The main concern of the new members was that they did not want to be limited by any projects imposed from the central office. These demands also

---

[258] Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left,1962-1968*, p. 82.

included a critical approach against a commitment to ERAP. The new members largely suppressed defenders of centralized organization. The 1965 National Convention proved that a new mood and direction had emerged in SDS. Paul Cowan cautioned that "the overall strategy of decentralization" had been put into practice before people "worked out practical means of facilitating it."[259] The outgrowth of decentralization in such a way closed effective ways of communicating "from one area of the movement to another, or from the movement as a whole to the outside the world." This, to Cowan, would result in a loss of network, which was crucial in creating a strong and determined movement:

> The movements are spread over the entire country and encompass many people, few of whom are known to one another. Many of the most intelligent people within the movements have been too busy acting within their locality to worry about writing for a national constituency.[260]

Cowan was right about his caution, but it was too late to prevent the situation. Even the "unity around ERAP was short-lived."[261] As many of the community projects failed, and local initiative took over the decision-making from the national level, ERAP chapters became independent projects. Many of the members left ERAP with disappointment and directed their energies to Vietnam protests. In May 1965, hundreds of students "made serious commitments to work to end the war in Vietnam, whatever the implications of such a commitment might be."[262] 1965 was clearly the year of dissolution in the attempt of decentralization:

---

[259] Paul Cowan, "1965 SDS National Convention Working Paper." SDS Microfilm, Series 2.A, No.16.

[260] Ibid.

[261] Steve Max, "From Port Huron To Maplehurst," Summer 1965. SDS Microfilm, Series 2.A, No.17.

[262] Paul Booth, "Working Papers, Summer Projects," May 1965. SDS Microfilm, Series 2.A, No.16.

> The Winter and Spring of 1965 were crucial to the present development of the organization. It was during this period that the notion of a single correct path to social change died, and was replaced by the only attitude which a diverse organization can adopt and still survive: namely, that anyone can work on what interests him and anything goes.[263]

As the result of the dissolution, the peace movement became the primary concern in SDS. In April 1965, local coordinators for the March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam met and there came "a consensus that the guts of a follow-up program would consist of full-time summer organizing projects."[264] The meeting was organized by SDS and as Paul Booth reported, out of the meeting SDS would "be able to make some kind of judgment about what kind of energies to put into a summer Vietnam program."[265]

Why was ERAP dissolved and why did it lose its dominance to the peace issues? Behind the serious arguments that defended ERAP and community organizing stood two important facts. One was the widening gap between the blacks and the lower class whites throughout the country, which began to undermine the valuable efforts of SNCC. Hayden was convinced that "violent conflict between Negroes and lower class whites" would not "force the American establishment to even make significant concessions." Rather he believed that it would "ignore the trouble and leave it to the local police,"[266] or would violently repress the conflict. Both of the options would result with more anger and disappointment among the blacks. ERAP and community organizing efforts were in this sense mainly aimed to preserve SNCC influence in the country by

---

[263] Max, "From Port Huron To Maplehurst."
[264] Booth, "Working Papers, Summer Projects."
[265] Ibid.
[266] Hayden and Wittman. "An Interracial Movement of the Poor?"

reconciling the blacks and poor whites under a common cause. Soon, apart from the PREP, all efforts and energies of SDS were channeled into this issue. It was with this approach that SDS became deeply bounded to the existence of SNCC.

The transition of the civil rights movement into black nationalism and the transition of nonviolent action into militant action made SDS obsolete. Apart from the peace issues, the power and influence of SDS as a white student movement was rooted within the organic ties between SDS and SNCC. In December 1967, "whites were expelled from SNCC by a vote of a nineteen to eighteen, with twenty-four abstaining."[267] This meant that whites were not ejected from the organization. Rather, whites tended to leave SNCC. This was a response to the black control arising within SNCC, which pressed for strict structure and militancy causing that whites lost their legitimacy. For Hayden, these whites "could not disagree with the demand for black control, but the personal consequences were shuttering." Most important, "the community, which was their total resource of friendship, income, and personal efficacy, was disintegrating."[268] As a consequence, "what happened in SNCC reverberated in SDS and in ERAP and where organizers gathered to chart their futures."[269] Most of the members sought for new identities, some involved in women's rights movements, some took militant action against racism and the others pursued an anti-war movement, limiting their radicalism to the end of Vietnam War. SDS lost its vision and its organizational initiative with the loss of these members. The vacuum was filled by

---

[267] Hayden, *Rebel,* p. 148.
[268] Ibid., p. 147.

[269] Ibid., p. 148.

diverse factions until a group with Maoist revolutionary vision based on violence took over the organization.

Tom Hayden continued his activism within the anti-war movements in the late sixties and then became involved in environmental and anti-nuclear movements in the seventies. He was elected "to the state Assembly in 1982 and the state Senate in 1992, seven consecutive victories on the west side of Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley."[270]

His activism continued during the 90s: He ran protest campaigns for Governor and Mayor of Los Angeles. In 1994, "he ran protest campaigns with virtually no funding for governor, receiving 15 percent of the Democratic primary vote; and for mayor of Los Angeles in 1997, winning 35 percent."[271] In 1996, he was reelected to the state Senate but was forced to retire in 2000. Today, he still pursues his activism and protest campaigns in his website on the current issues such as Iraq War and global justice. He is also the "national co-director of **No More Sweatshops**!, a coalition of labor, clergy, community and campus advocates of 'sweat-free' guidelines on public procurement and enforceable labor standards for corporate behavior."[272]

In July 2002, Tom Hayden and Dick Flacks issued an article named "The Port Huron Statement at 40" giving an account of the relevance of the statement for today. It was argued that the most important legacy of the statement was "the fact that it introduced the concept of participatory democracy to popular discourse and practice."[273] Today, even a glance at the web would show thousands of

---

[270] http://www.tomhayden.com/Biography.html
[271] Hayden, *Rebel*, p.383.
[272] http://www.tomhayden.com/
[273] Tom Hayden and Dick Flacks, "The Port Huron Statement at 40,"

references to it. It also "made sense of the fact that ordinary people were making history, and not waiting for parties or traditional organizations."[274] Women's liberation movements and anti-war movements throughout the American history have been the instances for this. As the article declared:

> These participatory practices, which had their roots in the town hall, Quaker meetings, anarchist collectives and even sensitivity training, are carried on today in grassroots movements such as the one against corporate globalization. The strength of organizations like the early SDS or SNCC, or today's Seattle-style direct-action networks, or ACT UP, is catalytic, not bureaucratic. They empower the passion of spontaneous, communal revolt, continue a few years, succeed in achieving reforms and yet have difficulty in becoming institutionalized. But while hierarchical mass organizations boast more staying power, they have trouble attracting the personal creativity or the energy of ordinary people taking back power over their lives. Participatory democracy offers a lens for looking at all hierarchies critically and not taking them as inevitable. Perhaps the two strands--the grassroots radical democratic thrust and the need for an organization with a program--can never be fused, but neither can one live without the other.[275]

Today, some of the agenda articulated in The Port Huron Statement was achieved: "The cold war is no more, voting rights for blacks and youth have been won, and much has changed for the better in the content of university curriculums."[276] But today, "the war on terrorism has revived" this agenda bringing back the cold war framework, while an "escalating national security state" has been preventing the development of civil liberties and social justice. For Hayden and Flacks, the Port Huron Statement has still been alive and significant due to this fact:

> To challenge the framework of the war on terrorism, to demand a search for real peace with justice, is as difficult today

---

http://www.tomhayden.com/SocMov.1.html
[274] ibid.
[275] ibid.
[276] ibid.

> as challenging the cold war was at Port Huron. Yet there is a new movement astir in the world, against the inherent violence of globalization, corporate rule and fundamentalism, that reminds us strongly of the early 1960s. Is history repeating? If so, "participatory democracy" and the priorities of Port Huron continue to offer clues to building a committed movement toward a society responsive to the needs of the vast majority.[277]

In October 21, 2003, in his "Evidence of Things Unseen: The Rise of a New Movement" Hayden announced that a new movement bigger than the movement of the 1960s was rising throughout the world based on "the global opposition to the war in Iraq and to an American empire"[278] with 10 million people demonstrating globally. Even in the case that it would not be successful, Hayden was still optimistic, declaring that "we at least will have reached millions more people with our message and networking, and we will need that public support in the years ahead."[279]

---

[277] ibid.
[278] Tom Hayden, "The Evidence of Things Unseen: The Rise of a New Movement," http://alternet.org/story/17000
[279] ibid.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Secondary Sources:

Anderson, Terry H. *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Aronowitz, Stanley. *The Death and Rebirth of American Radicalism.* New York: Routledge, 1996.

Breines, Wini. *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989.

Burns, Stewart. *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990.

Calvert, Gregory Nevala. *Democracy from the Heart: Spiritual Values, Decentralism, and Democratic Idealism in the Movement of the 1960s.* Eugene: Communitas Press, 1991.

Carson, Clayborne. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Cavallo, Dominick. *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Clecak, Peter. *Radical Paradoxes: Dilemmas of the American Left: 1945-1970*. New York: Harper &Row Publishers, 1973.

Diggins, Patrick John. *The Rise and Fall of the American Left*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992.

Ellis, Richard J. *The Dark Side of the Left: Illiberal Egalitarianism in America.* Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998.

Farrel, James J. *The Spirit of the Sixties: The Making of Postwar Radicalism.* New York: Routledge, 1997.

Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage.* New York: Bantam Books, 1993.

Hayden, Tom. *Rebel: A Personal History of the 1960s.* Los Angeles: Red Hen Press, 2003.

Miller, James. *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Morgan, Edward P. *The Sixties Experience: Hard Lessons about Modern America.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991.

Primary Sources:

DeTocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America.* Baskerville: Fontana Press, 1994.

Flacks, Dick. "America and the New Era
<http ://digital. lib.msu. edu/collections/ index. cfm? CollectionID=19>

Hayden, Tom. "The Evidence of Things Unseen: The Rise of a New Movement."
<http://alternet.org/story/17000>

Hayden, Tom <http://www.tomhayden.com/>

Hayden, Tom and Flacks, Dick. "The Port Huron Statement at 40".
<http://www.tomhayden.com/SocMov.1.html>

Jacobs, Paul and Landau, Saul. *The New Radicals: A Report with Documents.* New York: Vintage Books, 1966.

Mills, C. Wright. *The New Men of Power: America's Labor Leaders*. New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1971.

Mills, C. Wright. *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.

Mills, C. Wright. *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.

The Port Huron Statement. June 1962. From James Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago*.

Students for a Democratic Society Microfilm Collection:

Booth, Paul. "On Realignment." *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No.4. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Booth, Paul. "Working Papers, Summer Projects." May 1965. SDS Microfilm, Series 2.A, No.16.

Cowan, Paul. "1965 SDS National Convention Working Paper." SDS Microfilm, Series 2.A, No.16.

Davis, Rennie. "ERAP Projects: Toward an Interracial Movement of the Poor." *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No.9 (June 1964). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Flacks, Richard. "Peace Research and Education Project." *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No.1. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Garman, Betty. "SDS University Reform Project." *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No.1 (1962-63). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Gitlin, Todd. "President's Report." *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No.7 (April 1964). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Gitlin, Todd. "President's Report." *SDS Bulletin*, No.5 (February 1964). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Haber, Al. “Professionals and Social Change Project.” SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.3.

Haber, Al. “The National Council: A Reply to the President’s Report.” *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No.6 (March 1964). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Haber, Al and Jacobs, Barbara. “From Al Haber and Barbara Jacobs.” December 15, 1962.

Hayden, Tom. Letter to SDS members, 5 December 1961. SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.3.

Hayden, Tom. “Politics, The Individual, and SDS.” SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No. 6.

Hayden, Tom. “President’s Report.” *SDS Membership Bulletin,* No.1 (1962-63). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Hayden, Tom. “Prophet of the Powerless.” Interview by Ben Reade. SDS Microfilm, Series 2.B, No.78.

Hayden, Tom. “Student Social Action.” SDS Microfilm, Series 4.B, No.160.

Hayden, Tom. Untitled. *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No.4 (1962-63). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Hayden, Tom and Wittman, Carl. “An Interracial Movement of the Poor?” SDS Microfilm, Series 4.B, No.151.

League for Industrial Democracy. *A Program for Urban Democracy*. SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.3.

Mansonis, Jim. “National Council, 1962: Report of the National Secretary.” SDS Microfilm, Series 2.A, No.1.

Max, Steve. “From Port Huron To Maplehurst.” Summer 1965. SDS Microfilm, Series 2.A, No.17.

Potter, Paul. “President’s Views.” *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No.10 (July 1964). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Potter, Paul. “Which Way SDS?” *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.3, No.2. (October 1964). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Report: Newark Project. SDS Microfilm, Series 2.B, No.2.

Rothstein, Richard. "A Short History of ERAP." SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

SDS Constitution. SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.1.

SDS flyer. "to combat discrimination in the north act now…" SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.2.

SDS Membership Bulletin, No.2 (1962-63). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

SDS National Stuff. "To SDS Members." *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No.3 (1962-63). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Students for a Democratic Society Convention Bulletin. 1962. 25 April. SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.6.

Summer Report: Newark Community Union, 1964. SDS Microfilm, Series 4.B, No.154.

Webb, Lee. "National Secretary's Report 12/63." SDS Microfilm, Series 2.A, No.6.

Williams, Jim. "Notes on the Port Huron Statement." *SDS Membership Bulletin*, No.4 (1962-63). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.

Williams, Jim. "Reflections of a Southern Hillbilly SDSer." *SDS Bulletin*, Vol.2, No.8 (May 1964). SDS Microfilm, Series 4.A, No.19.